

Music & Letters

A Quarterly Publication

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APRIL, 1923

VOLUME IV.

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THE GIGANTIC IMAGE.

Faint sighings sounded, not of wind, amid
That riven waste of boulder and cactus flower ;
Primeval sand its sterile coverlid,
Unlocked eternity its passing hour.

Nought breathed or stirred beneath its void of blue,
Save when, in far faint dying whisper, strained
Down the sheer steep, where not even lichen grew,
Eroded dust, and, where it fell, remained.

Hewn in that virgin rock, nude 'gainst the skies,
Loomed mighty Shape—of granite brow and breast,
Its huge hands folded on unseeing eyes,
Its lips and feet immovably at rest.

Where now the Wanderers who this Image scored
For agelong idol here?—Death? Destiny? Fame?
Mute, secret, dreadful, and by man adored ;
Yet not a mark in the dust to tell its name.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE INCANTATION.

Green drowsed the valley. Glassed the sun
 Noon's vacancy of blue.
Hollow in nowhere trolled a voice
 Two echoless notes, Cuckoo.

O incantation dark, malign,
 What ghost within me stirred and said,
"Ten thousand thousand Springs are mine
 Would God that *you* were dead!"

WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE TEXTURE OF MODERN MUSIC

Cannot a man live free and easy
Without admiring Pergolesi,
Or through the world in comfort go
That never heard of Doctor Blow? . . .
I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach (or Batch, which is it?) . . .

Charles Lamb: "*Free Thoughts on some Eminent Composers.*"

The reason why my brother's so severe,
Vincenzio, is—my brother has no ear; . . .
His spite at music is a pretty whim.
He loves not it, because it loves not him.

Mary Lamb to Vincent Novello.

THERE are many ways of approach to music. Some men find its charm in the external fancies which it stimulates. The imagination gives it a dramatic, a literary, or a pictorial flavour, and a mind rich in such imagery will relate it to the panorama of life. Others are captured by the grandeur or by the subtlety of its form, by the internal play of themes and texture, by technical mastery of means. While a third attitude is that of pure contemplation. To suggest a meaning, or to analyse a technique, is for this latter mood the introduction of irrelevancy, distraction, incongruity; it is the setting up of arbitrary and artificial barriers between the essence of music and pure delight in it. Each of these approaches has its proper criteria, and it would be a narrow and deadening philosophy that should attempt to impair their legitimacy. Fertility and variety in experience are major qualities in art.

In choosing, therefore, for present purposes, a particular angle of vision, no claim is made, directly or indirectly, for an exceptional validity of judgment. Technical discussion has its modest place in the attempt to appraise an art, but it is mainly, in the last resort, the concern of the student, of a particular kind of spectator. The creative faculty transcends its technique, and inspiration may find expression in spite of almost any degree of clumsiness. The broken utterance may, indeed, be itself an earnest of conviction. It is too great a facility which is more often fatal.

Of the many formal characteristics which contemporary music exhibits, the most consistent is its devotion to qualities of texture. The music which we immediately inherit had prevailing interests of other kinds. The symphonic period busied itself chiefly with problems of architecture. It had to evolve, from the more or less versified dances of earlier times, extended instrumental forms whose consistency and cohesion had an architectural basis. The later period of drama-in-music concentrated the essence of its thought on the distillation of themes, whose function was pivotal, and whose musical adventures in the body of a work determined and justified its form. But though there are to be found, among contemporary composers, some who essay symphonic forms and who use thematic values, modernity as a whole has deserted both the practice of melodic versification, which was characteristic of even the greatest symphonic writers, and the later cult which preferred thematic drama. Contemporary music is predominantly a development of texture, and as the last great period in music when texture occupied this paramount place was that which is associated with Bach, it will provide an essential element of perspective if the two products are compared and contrasted. It is significant that modernity in this sense has synchronised with a growing appreciation of Bach.

The normal texture of Bach is contrapuntal, and its internal values have a horizontal derivation. He weaves melodic threads into a fabric whose quality is chiefly determined by the ordered beauty and individuality of its components. Harmonic values are also displayed, but these have their logical basis in the encounters of parallel strands of thought. The vertical splash of sound, so to speak, is not an end in itself. Chords seek their meaning in the behaviour of their parts. Tonality and form are equally contrapuntal in derivation, and must incorporate the general texture. Modulation, for instance, is not the mere handling of decisive chords; it is a detailed harnessing and guiding of individual parts, which may be disciplined in the process, but not destroyed.

Now a texture of this nature has its own ideals, its own limitations. It will demand, in the first place, the utmost cogency and beauty of melodic invention. It will equally insist on that economy and discipline of statement without which a brotherhood of melodies is impossible. And it will, above all, seek its climaxes in the intimacy and intensity of its thought, in the accumulated richness of its ordered complexity, rather than in the unexpectedness or vehemence of harmonic or dynamic contrasts. There are persistent rhythms in Bach, and there are arresting splashes of harmony, but they are usually complementary to his wealth of detail. They do not supplant

it. And even the simplest harmonic or rhythmic framework can be richly clothed.



Compare these ideals with the values associated with our own day. Modern texture is normally vertical, harmonic, a fabric of splashes of sound. It indulges in what it is pleased to call polyphony, but a modern score has few real parts; parts, that is, that have independent interest and validity for more than a short time. Orchestral parts now resemble horizontal sections cut through a landscape. They are like the contour lines of an ordnance map. They appear when the fabric reaches a particular degree of elevation. They disappear when the texture is thin. Their function in the technique is occasional, almost casual. Even where the musical apparatus is fairly constant, as in the string parts of an orchestra, or, indeed, in those of a quartet, there may be no real parts in the contrapuntal sense of the term. Everything is subject to vertical and harmonic exigencies, and modern players, with what our forefathers would have considered to be an amazing humility, have to be content with a place in the musical hierarchy which has just so little or just so much meaning as a composer-autocrat may determine. It is good if a part is interesting. It is no longer expected to be intelligible. Our values, in other words, are at right angles to those of Bach. We exploit masses and contrasts, and the medium is colour rather than line; the fabric is wall-paper rather than tapestry. And the effectiveness of a contemporary composer's speech may depend almost exclusively on the sensitiveness or daring of his harmonic methods.

If this be considered an indictment of contemporary music, common fairness demands that it be not addressed solely, or even chiefly, to the composers of to-day. The mischief, if mischief it is, was done a century ago, and were Bach to return and survey the music which superseded his, it is not modernity that would first engage him. He would see that already in Haydn and Mozart the "pretty tunes" had won the day. Beautiful as it may be hoped he would find them to be, he could not overlook their essentially versified character. He would fear the danger of such rigid models, the temptation to lesser

men to cultivate mere prettiness of melodic speech; and the works of the minor composers of the nineteenth century would justify his misgiving. The grandeur of Beethoven's architecture would not make him blind to the dynamic vigour which was so important a constituent in his most characteristic works, a vigour which could and did encourage sheer vehemence in many who imitated him. And the harmonic texture reflected, while it was itself rendered still more crystalline by these tendencies. Bach might point to the first chord of Beethoven's first symphony, to the first chord of the last movement of the ninth—both of them examples of effects which arrest the attention by reason of unusual or forcible statement—and turning from these to the first chord of Scriabine's "Prometheus," he would find but a difference of degree.

Bach might be a little wistful when he reached the programme-musicians, for he was not averse to an occasional excursion into the realm of literal description. But he would undoubtedly agree that while external ideas may stimulate the fancy, they can also destroy the judgment, and they can never permanently replace the values of pure music. Finally, he would reach our humble selves. What have we to show him? The pretty tunes are forsworn, the architecture is melting, the external dramas and labelled themes are out of fashion. One or two minor developments are new, at least in degree; in particular, the wealth of local colours and of semi-barbaric rhythms. Asia and Africa are imported into the concert-room, and the drum is beaten harder than ever before. And there is one major development in the attention now concentrated on the traditional music of the people, an attention which certainly enlarges the melodic horizon, though it is as yet too often incongruously distorted by the trappings of a style centuries later in sophistication. These accretions apart, there remains of our inheritance a predominantly vertical texture, an ever-increasing apparatus of sound, and a consequent leaning towards harmonies and rhythms which are new, or rich, or strange.

The story of the century between Beethoven and ourselves may, therefore, from the point of view of texture, be fairly said to hinge on the exploitation of chords as such. Their relationships control the fabric, in which "high lights" take the form of exceptional combinations. In early stages comparatively mild forms arrest the attention. These are then greatly attenuated in effect by constant use. More striking values are discovered; and so on, *ad infinitum*. Examples from Beethoven have already been given. Chopin, Schumann and, above all, Wagner, provided this form of progress with accumulating impetus. Even the initial crash of Mendelssohn's

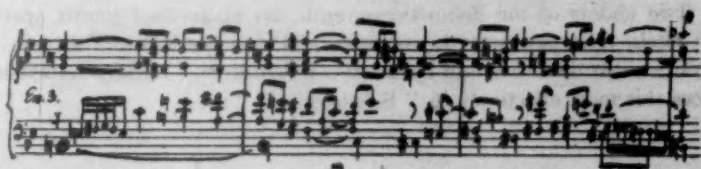
"Wedding March" embodied a popular taste already widely diffused.

It was essential to the function of such effects that they should be, in the technical sense, unprepared, and once this was granted, their use in like manner in the body of the work followed automatically. The use of chords striking in themselves or strange in their context, and the unexpected inferences or ambiguities of tonality and texture that such use involved, became normal features in the technique of expression. And the degree to which this method was already latent may be seen in Beethoven himself ("Diabelli" Variations, No. 20).



The whole variation from which the above passage is taken is exceptional in many respects, but there can be no dispute as to its "modernity," in the usual sense of that much-abused word. The vertical bias, the ambiguous tonalities, the chords, strange in themselves and still stranger in their context, are all present to an uncommon degree.

Compare with this a passage from Bach's G minor Organ Fantasia :—



These passages should be studied in their context; but exceptional as they are, both in their relation to the general texture of their respective composers, and in the convergence of style which, in isolation, they appear superficially to show, there is yet a clear difference of derivation. Bach rarely forgets his counterpoint. Beethoven rarely remembers his.

The jump to a texture typically modern is not very formidable. The following is from Scriabine's "Poème de l'Extase." It is reduced to essential terms :—



The chord in bar 3 is a comparatively novel variation and inversion of the first chord in the passage, A natural being an appoggiatura on B flat. The tonal quality of this chord is ambiguous, as all whole-tone chords are, but it is resolved regularly, if a little elliptically, through bars 5 to 8.

A few bars later occurs the following, which is interesting because it involves an ambiguity of tonality comparable in some respects to Spohr's enharmonic mannerisms :—



Two chords of the dominant seventh, an augmented fourth apart in pitch, have two notes in common, and it is possible to "switch" from one to the other and back again indefinitely. Rimsky-Korsakov does this most effectively in "Scheherazade" :—



Ex. 5, above, incorporates the same device, more elaborately developed. Scriabine is very fond of it, and one could almost lay odds

that when he reaches a dominant chord of this kind he will move the root an augmented fourth, and it is then an even chance as to which tonality he will finally choose. It is the kind of device for which the chord of the diminished seventh became so notorious that our fathers could bear it no more. Richard Strauss has in our day, however, made this chord live again by using its ambiguity in a very condensed form. He moves the roots with great emphasis, and his result is at least so much stronger than Scriabine's in that Strauss has more roots to play with. See the "Symphonia Domestica":—



Scriabine is in fact a formalist, and his most complex chords generally have classical foundations and resolve themselves more or less regularly at last. The following is from one of his piano pieces. The original is given, then a simplification, followed by the two resolutions which he alternately adopts. A second example of similar character is given verbatim:—

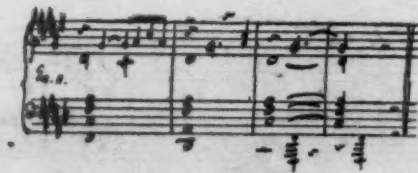


This much is obvious, that so far as chords are built up on the traditional roots—thus, for instance—



and used with whatever omissions or inversions, or with it matters not how many superadded "passing notes," as our fathers called them, or suspensions, or appoggiaturas, or what not: so far as they are thus built, and subsequently resolved, directly or indirectly, in fair consonance with inherited ideas of tonality, they are in the direct line of classical descent. Their genealogy may be greatly condensed, but their behaviour betrays their parentage.

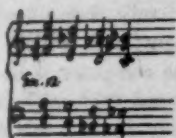
The break with tradition begins when such chords are either left "in the air," or when they move in a manner that eliminates the classic inferences; when they are unresolved, in fact. The end of the first act of *Pelléas and Mélisande* is an illuminating example in this regard:—



The above passage is the end of an extreme diminuendo, and the sounds die away imperceptibly. Now the musician of a past generation would have demanded, and his imagination would probably have supplied, a resolution of the last chord analogous to the resolution which Debussy actually gives in the first bar quoted. It is possible to "hear" this imaginary resolution just as in moments of strained attention we can "hear" a pianissimo note on a violin for some time after the bow has ceased to touch the string. But with increasing familiarity the ear begins to dispense with such inferences, accepting

Debussy's last chord as it stands as a point of rest, as a combination of notes already reduced to its simplest terms and having no necessary implications. And this chord may then become, as it actually has become in certain contemporary schools, invested with the finality, and incidentally with the monotony, that adheres to any conventional formula.

Another novel feature of Debussy's original style is what we may perhaps be allowed to call the harmonic "side-slip." He takes, for example, a chord of the ninth, and slides away with it whole, in any direction, until whatever tonality it originally had is, to say the least, highly attenuated. It has simply left the classical track :—

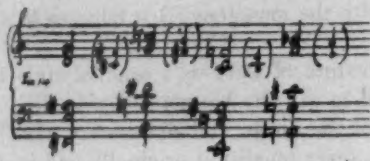


These chords also become "points of rest," not so much because their normal inferences are discounted, as because they cease, in such a context, to have any. It is then no more than a step to Goossens' :—



The practice and extension of these methods cannot be adequately studied apart from their whole context in the texture, and this is beyond verbal treatment. Quotation can give, at best, but a mere grammar of the subject. And grammatical inferences have a further disability which has to be constantly borne in mind. The composer himself may, and in many cases certainly will, deny that suggested elucidations of this nature have any real relation to the actual processes of his thought. He will use, for example, such progressions

as the following (omitting the notes in brackets), and will affirm that his thought is absolutely direct from chord to chord:—



But this does not deny to his hearer the right to discover historical foundations, conscious or unconscious, in the behaviour of such chords, and to interpolate imaginatively the inferences (in brackets) which traditionally belong to them and which may help to make an unfamiliar idiom clear. The composer is in this respect like the poet who chooses intuitively a word that may be magic in its effect. A commentator may legitimately analyse this effect into the associations which enrich the word in question. Our present purpose is commentary, and we conceive our danger to lie, not in the process of analysis, but in the inference that should above all things be avoided: namely, that our laboured synthesis of detail has any conscious parallel in the inspiration of creative thought itself.

With this permanent reservation, the following passages from Delius (see *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, January, 1920, in which the work appeared in full), may be reduced to skeleton in order to show their bearing on the evolution of texture:—



The last half-bar in Ex. 16 is a very clear case of the modern practice of eliminating what would heretofore have been inferred from the actual sounds at the beginning of this half-bar, considered alone. (See Ex. 14, above.)

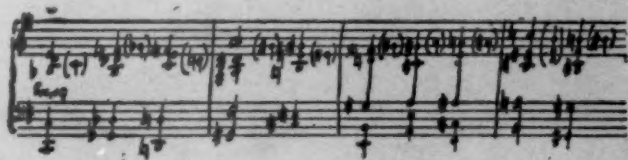
A more debatable case occurs in the following, taken from John Ireland's Prelude: "The Undertone." The first bar shows forms of "side-slip" analogous to Debussy and Delius above. But is it legitimate to suggest a genesis of the second bar's progressions by indicating an ellipsis which the interpolated note in brackets would fill?



Perhaps the closest and most homogeneous texture of this kind is to be found in Ravel, and it is both illuminating and amusing to imagine the platitudes he did not utter. Our quotation is from the "Valse nobles et sentimentales." The original is given first, and beside it a possible translation into musical journalese:—

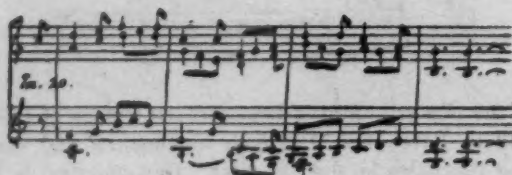


Another passage from the same work becomes a textbook exercise in suspensions and anticipations when the traditional resolutions are added, though it will be seen that many of these elements do move normally in Ravel's text itself, the disguise of their procedure lying in the simultaneous movement of other parts of the texture, which anticipates them and transforms them, when they do resolve, into further strange elements which may again resolve too late:—



"Your grasp of the obvious is painfully precise," Ravel might say; and the remark is just. But the present argument is so far fortified. A texture of this nature, however extreme in its condensation, yet has its logical foundation in classical traditions. Its novelty to our ears is due for the most part to its exclusive use of strong terms, its parallel avoidance of weak ones. Its obscurity, when it is obscure, may well be like that of classic verse, which is difficult rather through wealth of meaning than through lack of it.

A few bars from W. G. Whittaker's Part Song, "Oh, I ha'e seen the roses blaw," exhibits the quality of texture often associated with the study of folk-music:—



Its atmosphere has, to our ears, a certain relation to that of mediæval modal music, but this derivation must not be pushed too far. The neo-modal music of to-day is projected on a background of modern resources; resources, both technical and formal, which it freely incorporates. It tries to make the best of both worlds, and the mixture certainly offers great possibilities.

The growth of multiple tonality, and of pure chromaticism, or atonality, must now be dealt with.

GEORGE DYSON.

(To be continued.)

HANS PFITZNER

DURING recent visits to Germany I have often attempted to explain to German musicians the position which Vaughan Williams holds in English music, since in Germany his music is practically unknown. Almost invariably my friends have replied to me, "Ah yes, I see—a sort of English Pfitzner." If I were to attempt to describe Pfitzner and his music to English people, I can hardly think that they would say, "Ah yes, a sort of German Vaughan Williams." In personal appearance and in personal character those two composers would strike anyone as utterly dissimilar. Utterly dissimilar, too, are the actual sounds of their music, though there are certain pages of Pfitzner's in which a quick glance at the disposition of notes on the page might easily recall certain pages of the English composer's. The coupling of the two men together is from a general point of view inappropriate, but it has, none the less, a certain aptness, for they have points of contact, and they touch in a region which criticism is hardly able to map out. Pfitzner has, for a large section of musical Germany, become a symbolical figure. He stands for certain ideals which all thinking people must respect, even if they sympathise little with their expression, and still less with the distortion of them by lesser minds. His music is intensely and consciously German in character, but there are moments when it transcends the limits of race, and in those moments it might belong to all who can enter into the spirit of Haydn and Beethoven.

Hans Pfitzner was born at Moscow on May 5, 1869, the son of German parents. His father was a violinist, who, a few years later, became conductor at the Frankfurt Stadttheater. From 1886 to 1890 the boy was a pupil of the Hoch'sche Conservatorium, at Frankfurt, and studied composition with Ivan Knorr, who was also the teacher of several English composers who have since become well known. In 1890, Pfitzner went to Coblenz as a teacher at the School of Music. A few years later he became assistant conductor at the Opera in Mainz, and from there went to Berlin, where he conducted the *Oper des Westens*, which at that time was housed in the Theater des Westens; it eventually was succeeded by the Deutsches Opernhaus, in Charlottenburg. In 1908 Pfitzner was appointed conductor of the

Opera at Strassburg, and at Strassburg he remained until 1918, when he settled down in a house on the Ammersee, in Bavaria, in order to devote himself entirely to composition. In 1920 he was appointed by the Prussian Ministry of Education to take a class for advanced composition at the (formerly Royal) Academy of Arts in Berlin, Schreker, Seiffert and Busoni being also appointed at the same time. It is said that Professor Pfitzner has only had one pupil there so far.

Pfitzner's first composition of importance was the incidental music to Ibsen's play *Das Fest auf Solhaug* (1890). In 1898, an orchestral work was performed in Berlin. A pianoforte trio appeared in 1896, and a number of songs belong to this early period. These songs are the most characteristic works of Pfitzner during his young manhood. They are curiously unequal, but the best of them show a marked originality. As a song writer Pfitzner derives his style from Schumann. Schumann has always had the strongest influence upon him, in spite of a certain indebtedness to Wagner. Like most composers he is an unsatisfactory accompanist of his own songs, but nothing could be more sympathetic than his performance of the pianoforte parts to those of Schumann's. He often allows himself to link up the various items of a singer's group by improvised passages of transition. Heaven forbid that the average accompanist should follow this example, but it is a liberty which can gladly be accorded to Herr Pfitzner. The average lover of music, as a rule, prefers those works of any great composer which belong to his middle period. The popular Mozart is the Mozart of *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and the three great symphonies; the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* stand for Beethoven; Verdi, to most people, is the author of *Aida* and the *Requiem*. Schumann is not so easily divisible into three periods; in any case the favourite works of Schumann are those of his earlier life. Pfitzner has always been more inclined towards the late works of such composers as have influenced him. The Schumann who has entered most deeply into his personality is not the familiar one. The song which he picks out more than once in his critical writings for admiration is "Auf einer Burg." It is a song very seldom heard in concert rooms; but the musician who knows it intimately has got the key to Pfitzner's mind.

"Herr Oluf," a ballad for baritone and orchestra (Op. 12—1891), is badly made, but shows great originality in the use of diatonic discords. If I remember right, it was Parry who used to say that originality in the use of diatonic discords was the real mark of a creative mind in music. The ballad suffers from a prolixity of long orchestral interludes. The literary poem is merely an excuse for a symphonic poem. The declamation drags, owing to the time which has to be wasted in developing symphonic themes. The whole work is hampered

by that fatal German tendency to write in common time. "Abschied" (Op. 9—1898) shows an admirable treatment of words and a very skilfully managed accompaniment. The pianoforte part is based on an arpeggio figure which at first sight seems commonplace; but it is worked out with masterly ingenuity and economy of notes, such as might have won commendation even from Gabriel Fauré. It is a genuinely beautiful song. Another example of well-treated words is the "Herbstbild" (Op. 21—1907). Comparison with Brahms is at once provoked by "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer" (Op. 2), and Pfitzner stands the comparison very well; his setting is, indeed, the more intimate and poetical of the two. Another attractive song is "Der Gärtner" (Op. 9), which is more in the manner of Robert Franz. One of the most remarkable of Pfitzner's songs is "Venus Mater" (Op. 11), which has a singularly strong and beautiful vocal line. Strong vocal line and economy of accompaniment are qualities very rare in any German song-writer; even from these few early examples we can see that Pfitzner is a man of unusual gifts. His German romanticism is more obvious in such a song as "Zorn" (Op. 15). The words are by Eichendorff, and characteristically "romantic." Pfitzner's setting is a very noble piece of declamation, but an English reader cannot feel much sympathy for its exaggeratedly chivalrous rhetoric, which as a natural consequence receives an exaggeratedly cumbrous accompaniment.

The complete essence of Pfitzner's individual style is shown in "An die Mark" (Op. 15). The words are by Ilse von Stach-Lerner, and I venture to print them here, as it is impossible for me to put the music before my readers. They are of a type which, as far as I may hazard a guess, must make a peculiarly intimate appeal to Pfitzner's temperament.

Bereifte Kiefern, atemlose Seen,
Die träumen einem dunklen Auge gleich
In ew'ger Sehnsucht von des Frühlings Reich,
Und drüber hin ein schwarzer Zug von Kräh'n.

Viel junges Leben will die Sonne seh'n.
Da sitzt die Schwermut schon am Waldesrand
Und schreibt geheime Zeichen in den Sand,
Kein Frühlingssturm wird ihre Schrift verweh'n.

Und eines Tages kommt der junge Mai,
Und dennoch unter glückverlor'nen Küssen
Lebt ein Bewusstsein dass wir sterben müssen,
Dass alles nur ein Traum und schmerzlich sei.

Dies Land, da Wunsch und Hoffnung selig sind
 Und doch in ihrem rätselvollen Wesen
 Von stiller Trauer niemals zu erlösen,
 Ist meine Heimat, und ich bin sein Kind.*

It is a strange surprise to find Pfitzner experimenting in the whole-tone scale. "An den Mond" (Op. 18—1906) has nothing in common with Debussy; but here again Pfitzner reminds an English reader of Fauré. The whole song, both voice-part and accompaniment, is built upon the succession of whole tones. It is a big song, broadly conceived. One cannot for a moment suppose that Pfitzner deliberately modelled himself on Fauré; it is quite within the bounds of possibility that he never so much as heard of him, for Pfitzner is no friend to French music. But friend or no friend, Pfitzner, for all his passionate devotion to pure German ideals, shows at times a fineness of intellect and a contrapuntal asceticism which give his music an almost French quality. In many cases he is only too German, with a German tendency to overload his accompaniments. We cannot enter into the feelings of his passionate baritones, always compelled to bawl their way *fortissimo* on long-drawn high notes through furiously energetic pianoforte parts, or into the kittenish humour of certain romantic poets who seem to be as attractive to Pfitzner as they are to Schumann and Richard Strauss. Very German is the direction, "Sehr langsam, mit Wehmut und Ueberschwang," which heads a setting of the 92nd sonnet of Petrarch—needless to say, set in a German translation (Op. 27—1909). Remembering the normal standard of "expression" at German song recitals, I shudder to think what the average German singer would make of an attempt to follow the composer's instruction in this song; but it is a song of undoubted beauty in itself. It is extremely contrapuntal, and Pfitzner when contrapuntal is Pfitzner at his best. In form it is rather rambling, but it makes a determined effort to deal truly with the rhythm. If any English singer is tempted to undertake it, I would counsel him to treat it with extreme care and reticence, to be strictly accurate in rhythm, to sing it with a real

*Hoary pines and unruffled lakes lie dreaming with eyes of gloom, ever longing for the return of spring; above them fades into the distance a flight of rooks.

The sun loves to look upon young life. But down to the water's edge reigns ancient melancholy. She writes her secret tokens in the sand, which no spring spate will ever wash away.

And when youthful May came in her season, through all her love-lorn kisses she knew that death must follow and stern pain—that life was all a dream.

This land, where hope and desire are all our happiness and yet are linked by some inscrutable decree with secret sorrow—this land is my home, and her child am I.

sense of literature and a broad understanding of phrase; he can then safely leave Pfitzner's music to carry its own expression.

Pfitzner has written a certain amount of chamber-music. As is the case with the songs, the chamber-music is variable in quality; some of it is a very tedious imitation of Schumann. Twenty or twenty-five years ago, when it was written, chamber-music of this type was received with sympathy and respect; at the present day we are beginning to be a little sceptical as to the merits of even Schumann and Brahms themselves, and for their imitators we have no further use. In the String Quartet (1902-3), however, Pfitzner shows his own original qualities. It need hardly be said that it is a long work. German audiences like long works. They are, indeed, puzzled and irritated by short ones, such as modern English composers write. They are congenitally deficient in mental alertness. They like to take their music slowly; they like its thought to move at a pace which gives it time to sink in. Even modern critics will say that the real test of a symphony or quartet is its *adagio*. They may possibly be right: a certain great English teacher of composition used to set his elementary pupils to write *scherzos*, because they were the easiest things to write well. But he had, I think, another reason for doing so: he wanted to encourage alertness of mind, and counteract the natural tendency of youth towards shapeless sentimentality. Sentimentality, strange as it may seem, is not Pfitzner's besetting sin; his mind is too contrapuntal for that. Counterpoint, in the high sense, is not an average German characteristic. Bach is contrapuntal by date rather than by conviction. His counterpoint is the natural language of his period and of his favourite instrument, the organ. With Mozart counterpoint is a passion, with Beethoven an intellectual agony; and neither Mozart nor Beethoven can be classed as average German composers. With Brahms it is a moral duty, with Max Reger an academic exercise. Reger somewhat resembles those old-fashioned English scholars who spent their leisure hours turning everything that they could lay hands on into Latin and Greek verses. Pfitzner's attitude to counterpoint is very individual. We can often find in his counterpoint reminiscences of Beethoven; but that is in itself individual and exceptional among German composers. For Pfitzner's Beethoven, like Pfitzner's Schumann, is the composer of the third period, and it is very rare in German music of the nineteenth century to find any trace of that influence. Pfitzner becomes contrapuntal when he is at his greatest emotional intensity. We find this in his operas as well as in the quartet. Very characteristic of him is the thoughtful *allegro*, starting quietly in D major and leading to a second subject in B major; a development section brings back the first

subject in D again, but with an entirely new treatment; it moves again towards B major, but develops the second subject at greater length, tending towards the normal tonic, but collapsing at the end into B minor, in which the movement, after a lengthy coda, comes to an end. The second movement is a *scherzo* in D major, with a middle section in B flat. Here the composer is under the influence of Schumann's rhythmical movements—those themes not for marching, but for those who walk for their own pleasure; Pfitzner, as a matter of fact, makes a very much better quartet movement of it than Schumann ever did. The slow movement, in C minor, is almost entirely contrapuntal. It combines themes by inversion as well as by augmentation and diminution; the general result is not what the average critic calls "academic," but remarkably full of emotion, since all the themes have a very strongly marked and expressive personality. It is at once the most passionate and the most intellectual movement of the whole quartet. It leads directly into the *finale*, which is a cheerful *allegro* rather in the tradition of Haydn.

One of Pfitzner's most individual qualities is his sense of humour, which pervades the whole of his work. We shall find it cropping up perpetually even in that extremely serious opera *Palestrina*, and, indeed, at the most unexpected moments of it. It comes out characteristically in his song "Die Heinzelmännchen" (1902-3), which describes the activities of those amiable goblins who, when we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, carry out our work for us. As a song for public singing (it has an orchestral accompaniment) its humour is probably too German to bear transplanting to another country. I mention it here because it is this peculiar goblin-like temperament which gives Pfitzner his strange individuality. One of his biographers, contrasting him with Gustav Mahler, the Jew yearning for Catholicism, observes very acutely that Pfitzner's most intimate yearning, on the other hand, is, one may say, the airy effort of a goblin, who can never shake off the elemental spirit of the grotesque, but who clearly is striving perpetually, with an impulse that is not to be diverted, hindered or resisted, towards an ideal of beauty which belongs to the highest and farthest "harmony of the spheres."^{*}

It is idealism rather than humour which prevails in Pfitzner's first opera, *Der arme Heinrich* (Mainz, 1895). The libretto is based on the same story as that of Sullivan's *The Golden Legend*; but

^{*} Pfitzners allerintimste Sehnsucht, dem entgegen, ist der luftige Strebenszug etwa eines Koboldes, dem eigentlich der Elementargeist des Grotesken arg im Nacken sitzt, den es aber sichtlich zum Schönheit-Ideal einer höchsten und letzten "Sphärenharmonie" unentwegt, unaufhaltsam, unwiderstehlich mehr und mehr hindrängt.

although Pfitzner is writing for the theatre and Sullivan for the concert-room, Pfitzner concentrates his interest far more deeply on the psychological aspect of the story, instead of emphasising those external and picturesque episodes which form so large a part of Sullivan's cantata. Lucifer makes no appearance in the opera. The libretto is by James Grun, whose style no doubt makes him sympathetic to Pfitzner, but is unsuited to the dramatic handling of a story. Pfitzner can make the feelings of the characters real, but he cannot make the characters themselves real. The emotions do not arise out of the personalities on the stage: they are the composer's emotions, and the utmost that they can do is vaguely to materialise the shadowy persons to whom they are assigned. The poet loses himself in poetic phrases, the composer perpetually wanders off into dreamy meditations. Pfitzner is classed by German critics as an imitator of Wagner, but however much he may have learned from Wagner, his music sounds Wagnerian only in so far as there is a certain language common to practically all German composers of the neo-romantic period. English people imagine Wagner to have been the sole creator of it because the only other German composer of that time with whom they are equally well acquainted is Brahms.

Der arme Heinrich made few appearances on the German stage. It was followed in 1901 by *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, produced for the first time at Elberfeld. This again has had little success, though Mahler did his best for it in Vienna. The plot is inextricably confused. It deals with beings of a romantic fairy world, halfway between Wagner and Humperdinck. The stage directions suggest that the poet (James Grun, as before) was inspired mainly by the pictures of Böcklin and Hans Thoma. The total result is a work that is too incorporeal and imaginative for the practical conditions of the stage, though it contains a great deal of very beautiful music. In this work we see again appearing that grotesque element which is characteristic of Pfitzner; one of the chief personages is the "Moormann," a figure evidently suggested to the poet by the Nickelmännchen in Gerhard Hauptmann's *Versunkene Glocke*, who in his turn must have been suggested to some extent by Caliban.

German audiences will put up with a good deal in the way of theatrical tediousness, but Pfitzner sought to take them into a world where they had little inclination to follow him. Pfitzner's early operas coincide more or less in date with the first successes in Germany of the younger Italians—Mascagni, Leoncavallo and Puccini. The motive power of all operas in all countries is commonly held to be the emotion of love, and the more crudely and energetically it is expressed the stronger is the chance of popularity. Pfitzner repudiates the erotic

element in his operas altogether. This asceticism should have led him to a more sympathetic appreciation of Busoni, who has recently expressed his vigorous condemnation of the *duetto d'amore*. But Busoni's criticism is evidently aimed at Franz Schreker, in whose operas the erotic element runs riot; and he certainly takes pleasure in the satirical treatment of love, for which Mozart provides the example. Pfitzner has written some remarkably interesting essays on various points connected with opera; but he is too completely a romantic to have much enthusiasm for Mozart.

The collection of essays, "*Vom musikalischen Drama*," show clearly that Pfitzner has a strong sense of the stage, though they are probably dismissed as unpractical and pedantic by those who profess to have the routine of the theatre at their fingers' ends. Pfitzner, like Mahler, has a furious hatred of ordinary theatrical tradition. He knows only too well how operas, even in conscientious Germany, are habitually prepared. His first essay deals with the character of Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*. To most theatrical people Tristan and Isolde are the ordinary tenor and soprano, whose business it is to commit adultery. Kurwenal and Brangäne are the ordinary friend and *confidante*. Melot is a subsidiary part which can be given to any second-rate singer, like the "messenger," "first or second citizen," who come into so many operas. Pfitzner studies the opera from the point of view of the poem. He points out that the underlying idea of the opera is the distinction between what Wagner symbolises in the words "day" and "night." "Day" is the ordinary concrete world; "night" is a mystical state which Wagner himself cannot explain. To this mysterious world Tristan and Isolde belong; the progress of the opera is their gradual progress towards it. Marke, Kurwenal and Brangäne do not understand, but their passionate loyalty gives them faith. Melot, on the other hand, is the correct man of the world, with a purely conventional sense of honour. He is not a villain or a traitor; he is merely stupid. To the same class of ordinary mortals belong Gunther and Gutrune; also Wolfram, who, as Pfitzner points out, is an unpleasant character, for he throws his friend Tannhäuser over just at the moment when he stands most in need of a friend's loyalty. Another conventional man of the world is Hunding; and Pfitzner observes that Hunding ought not to be made up with a black beard, but with the fair hair of the average German; it is Siegmund who is expressly described by Wagner himself as a dark man (*der braune Wälsung*). The public likes to identify itself with the hero and heroine of an opera, and for that reason Siegmund and Sieglinde, like Tamino and Pamina, must be made to look like typical Germans. But, as Pfitzner remarks, if the situation of *Die*

Walküre were to be reproduced in ordinary life, everybody would be on the side of Hunding.

These literary studies show the background of Pfitzner's mentality. He is preoccupied with ideas rather than with facts—he is a philosopher and a poet. Above all, he is preoccupied with the distinction of Schopenhauer between the two worlds of "will" and "imagination." And, like Wagner and many others who have gone their own way regardless of the world, he hates the world of conventionalism and values above all things the loyalty of those who are faithful to him. The papers on his own librettos explain the moral ideas that lie behind them; they do not enter into the really difficult problem of how to construct a libretto for musical setting. It is always the moral idea that interests him; that is why he picks out *Hans Heiling* and *Lohengrin* for analysis. Both operas deal with a semi-supernatural hero, who to Pfitzner's mind stands for the man of imagination. It is amusing, too, to note Pfitzner's contempt for anything that is not German. We English people can hardly realise how Gounod's *Faust* and Thomas's *Mignon* strike a cultivated German mind. To us they are just agreeable operas; Pfitzner's indignation is aggravated by the fact that in spite of Goethe most Germans find them as agreeable as we do. Verdi's *Otello* and *Falstaff* he puts in the same category, besides apparently regarding Shakespeare as a German poet. English people are inclined to think that Verdi was marvellously successful in translating Shakespeare into music, whatever they may think of Thomas's *Hamlet* and that German travesty of *Falstaff*, Nicolai's *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*. I am glad to see that this last work meets with Pfitzner's disapproval, for its eternal popularity with German audiences still stands in the way of German appreciation of Verdi's masterpiece.

A later pamphlet, "Die neue Aesthetik der musikalischen Impotenz" (1920), amounts in the main to the assertion that music depends on primary inspiration. Pfitzner's language is often obscure and his thought apt to wander; in any case, it is very difficult to describe musical processes in words. If I have understood Pfitzner rightly, he desires to condemn that type of intellectualism in musical composition which regards the whole as more important than the parts. In his previous book he contrasts the methods of music and poetry, pointing out that in music the "idea" is *gegenwärtig*, whereas in poetry it is *allgegenwärtig*: that is, that the "idea" of a poem can only be grasped when it has been read through from beginning to end, whereas the "idea" of a piece of music is inherent in its first theme, out of which the rest grows. Thus a poet can conceive the idea of a poem before he has thought of a single definite phrase, and,

conversely, it would be absurd for a poet to conceive of a few separate lines of poetry and then say that he had imagined a poem. To the musician, on the other hand, it is absurd that anyone should conceive of the general plan of a symphony without having conceived a single musical phrase of it; and similarly, the musician may conceive musical themes without being at all clear as to what he is going to do with them. The form of the piece will grow gradually out of the themes. It is obvious that this theory of Pfitzner's will not commend itself to all musicians. It works in his own case, because he undoubtedly has a very remarkable power of inventing expressive themes, and has further a very individual sense of contrapuntal writing which enables him to develop them in his own way. His weakness is his indifference to form and proportion; he rambles on with no apparent power to conceive of a work as a definite whole. On the other hand, it must be admitted that every note that he writes is significant; there is never a bar of conventional padding in his work.

From his musical compositions, from his writing, and from such few biographical facts as are available one can make a sort of portrait of the man. Poet and philosopher by temperament; somewhat narrow and pedantic by education; thrown into the practical routine of theatrical life, passionately devoted to the theatre as an artistic ideal, irritated and depressed at every moment by the utter want of idealism among those who make the stage their profession; driven by his own sensitiveness into spiritual solitude; becoming gradually more and more embittered against the conventional world and more and more conscious of his own individual inspiration. A man with a mission, but with little or no power of leadership; what the world calls a man with a grievance. A German, intensely conscious of his Germanism, with that curious German idolatry of art, more especially of the art of music, and, as the result, with that German exaggeration of reverence for himself as *der Künstler*, as one of art's high priests. The English reader must not mistake this mental condition for mere self-conceit. It comes of an excessive reverence for the past, more especially for the great German past of music. Perpetual disappointment seems to have reduced Pfitzner to a state of chronic indignation. He appears to be possessed by a feverish horror and resentment at all music which is not German and at all music which breaks with the traditions of the nineteenth century.

This is more or less the portrait which he draws of himself in his latest opera *Palestrina* (Munich, June, 1917). It is difficult for one outside Germany to analyse exactly the sequence of events which have brought Pfitzner to his present position in the musical and political world. He has come to be regarded as the musical repre-

sentative of the extreme Nationalist party. When his *Romantic Cantata* was performed for the first time at Berlin on January 27 (the birthday of William II.), 1922, it was obvious even to a foreigner that the audience belonged largely to the social circles of the Extreme Right. Whatever their political opinions may be, many Germans view modern art with apprehension at this particular moment, because they feel that the reckless individualism of it is disruptive in its influence just when Germany stands most in need of unity. To such people the high ethical tendency of Pfitzner makes an obvious appeal, just as in the case of Schiller, whom they feel to be more valuable to German idealism than Goethe. It is in South Germany that Nationalist tendencies are most powerful, and it is natural that Pfitzner's *Palestrina* should have been first appreciated at Munich and Stuttgart. It has been performed at Berlin and in other towns as well, and although it has not become a popular success like D'Albert's *Tiefland*, it has been accepted as a work of first-rate importance with a curious symbolical value which makes a performance of it an occasion of some solemnity.

The story of the opera is derived from the popular legend of Palestrina, which is not in accordance with the known facts of his life. The first scene is laid in Palestrina's house in Rome. From the conversation of his son Ighino (aged 15) and his pupil Silla (aged 17) we learn that Palestrina is in a state of depression since the death of his wife Lucrezia, and is unable to compose. Cardinal Borromeo enters with Palestrina and informs him that the Council of Trent will abolish all figurate church music unless a modern Mass can be written which will satisfy its conditions. He expects Palestrina to compose this Mass; Palestrina refuses, and the Cardinal goes away in a rage. Palestrina is then visited by the spirits of nine deceased composers, who tell him that it is his duty to go on composing. An angel appears and sings the first phrase of the *Missa Papa Marcelli*; further encouragement is given by the ghost of Lucrezia and more angels; Palestrina seizes a pen and with the help of the heavenly host, who become visible and audible in the background, writes the whole of the Mass and collapses. Silla and Ighino find him at dawn unconscious, pick up the scattered leaves of music and take them away.

The second act shows us the Council of Trent. It is a satirical picture of a committee meeting. The enterprising legate Cardinal Novagerio endeavours to settle the important business privately with Cardinal Borromeo over a glass of wine, while the other ecclesiastics are arriving. There is much talk and much quarrelling over questions of precedence, especially on the part of Count Luna, the representative of the King of Spain. The question of Palestrina's Mass is brought

forward by Borromeo, but nothing is settled, and the confusion is so great that the chairman adjourns the meeting. The scene ends with the servants who come in to clear the hall taking up their masters' quarrels and coming to blows; the Archbishop of Trent calls in his soldiers, who fire and leave the stage covered with dead bodies.

The third act brings us back to Palestrina, who is in a state of nervous prostration. But the boys have given the new Mass to the Papal singers and they have sung it to the Pope, who comes himself in state to give Palestrina his thanks and his blessing. Borromeo returns and asks Palestrina's forgiveness for his harsh words. Palestrina is left improvising at his chamber-organ, while the crowd are heard in the streets hailing him as the saviour of music.

The first act lasts an hour and forty minutes, the second an hour and ten minutes, the third just over half an hour. The work belongs to the category of *Festspiele*, like *Parsifal*, and both performers and audience are expected to approach it in a spirit of special devotion. It is an intolerably boring work. A German friend with whom I went to see it in Berlin insisted on coming away after the second act, saying to me, "Ist das nicht zu affreusement Boche?" Yet in spite of its appalling tediousness I went four times to see it, and would never raise an opportunity of seeing it again. It grows upon one still more by private study. Palestrina is obviously intended to be Pfitzner himself. He has been his own librettist, and this gives the opera a still more personal character. Its literary style has been sharply criticised by German reviewers for its colloquialisms and such solecisms as calling a cardinal "his holiness." A foreigner does not notice these things much, especially as the singers seldom bring the words out very clearly. The tediousness of the opera is due partly to Pfitzner's own incurable tendency to preach, and partly to the inability of any German composer since Wagner to concentrate his main musical thought in the voice parts. The interest is too much assigned to the orchestra, and the result is that the characters on the stage become indefinite. Very characteristic of Pfitzner is the irruption of humour even in the scene with the ghosts, who mingle gentle badinage with their pious admonishments. The council-scene is full of comic episodes, provided principally by the Patriarch of Abyssinia, a venerable old gentleman who goes to sleep and is suddenly called upon to speak, with the result that he makes a complete hash of Palestrina's name, and the Bishop of Budoja, who is consistently a jovial buffoon, alternately a nuisance and a relief to all the other members of the council, except, of course, the Spaniards. Technically, the scene is masterly; it derives much from Meyerbeer, but its musical material is pure Pfitzner, and it shows that modern composers can

learn something from Meyerbeer after all. The most beautiful moment of the opera is the appearance of the angels in Act I., which is all the more striking after the protracted scene of the deceased composers; the long prevalence of male voices is a deliberate preparation for the sudden unexpected entrance of the high soprano. Pfitzner has evidently learned something from the bird in *Siegfried*. The music uses themes from Palestrina, but it never really sounds like sixteenth century music. Yet the diatonic melody and the contrapuntal handling give the whole work a dignity and asceticism which is rare in modern German music. Pfitzner has nothing of the "gusto and slickness" which are the distinguishing marks of Richard Strauss. He would probably regard such qualities as altogether detestable. He has far more affinity to Vincent d'Indy and to Vaughan Williams—a certain affinity, too, to Rutland Boughton; it is not that their music is similar in sound, but that they aspire to the same sort of ideals. Indeed, this very similarity of ideal makes them different in sound, because each composer for that very reason is closely bound to the natural rhythms of his own language.

Pfitzner's last work, the *Romantic Cantata (Von deutscher Seele)*, is also most clearly beautiful and satisfying. It is a setting of various poems by Eichendorff for soli, chorus and orchestra. They have little unity of idea, beyond this general expression of romantic feeling. The cantata has Pfitzner's usual faults; it tends to become rambling and incoherent. But it has an extraordinary beauty of musical invention; it is utterly unlike any other work of the kind, and it is held together by its inherent unity of style and still more by its intense fervour of expression. I doubt whether it can be recommended to English choral societies. Eichendorff in English can hardly escape the flatness of Longfellow; though I do not think that German romantic feeling is by any means antipathetic to the majority of musical people in England. But the cantata has this practical drawback: its choral writings are what we should call easy, being derived from Beethoven rather than from Bach, and would present too little difficulty for our ambitious singers, while the orchestral part is extremely hard to interpret properly and even with a first-class orchestra would require several rehearsals. In Germany such rehearsals can be had; in England we expect choral works to be given with not more than a single full rehearsal.

Pfitzner's following in Germany is not very large. The political interest in him is of no particular consequence: it may have helped his reputation in Germany, but it is probably no more than a passing phase. In England I think he might well find appreciation. There are still many people in this country who cannot altogether accept

the newest fashions from France or Russia, though they may well feel that they have had enough of Brahms and Wagner. Pfitzner is firmly rooted in the classics, but he has a definitely original style and is often extremely daring in his use of dissonances. He is intensely German in thought, but not at all conventionally German; and the reaction which we are now feeling against the products of musical Germany is really a reaction against German stock conventions, not against the German ideal of beauty. What has prevented Pfitzner from becoming popular in his own country is his puritanism, and it is exactly that quality which should make him sympathetic to English people. The quality which German critics find generally in English music, even in quite modern English music, is *unsinnliche Heiterkeit*, cheerfulness without sensuality. I do not think that English people, even when they are musicians, are at all ascetic by temperament; but we do on the whole seem to feel that we want music, at any rate, to express the more spiritual side of our nature. Some foreigners would say that this inhibition of the Dionysiac element is what makes England a hopelessly unmusical country. But, Dionysiac or not, we can always be certain that English people will be very content with themselves as they are.

EDWARD J. DENT.

THE PIANOFORTE WORKS OF CHABRIER

"THERE is no French musician to whom fate has been more unjust." If this remark of M. Jean-Aubry surprises the average student of music, still more will he be startled by another pronouncement of the same critic: "In modern French pianoforte music the *Pièces pittoresques* of Chabrier are as important as the works of Debussy and Ravel." Now M. Jean-Aubry, though he has his enthusiasms, does not scatter hasty judgments habitually. The consideration of these two remarks will bring us to the heart of our subject.

How has fate been unjust to Emmanuel Chabrier? He died in 1894, prematurely; though fifty-three is at first sight no unripe age for a musician. He was past his first youth, however, before he gave himself wholly to his art. All his important works appeared in the 'eighties. It is this short span of activity that makes the ways of fate seem bitter. He came early to Paris from Ambert (Puy-de-Dôme); in 1879, throwing up a post in the Ministry of the Interior, he leapt into the forefront of the French musical renaissance. He was an ardent Wagnerian in days when it needed courage to be one; he helped Lamoureux to produce *Lohengrin* and *Tristan* for the first time in France. Yet he was no mere partisan, for it was he who voiced the feelings of a band of friends and disciples over the grave of César Franck in 1890. As the most obvious creative achievements of these busy years he left *Gwendoline*, a music drama clearly showing the influence of Wagner; *Le Roi Malgré Lui*, a brilliant *opéra comique*; and the well-known orchestral rhapsody *España*, the outcome of a holiday in Spain. He left also, besides piano pieces, the legend of a characteristic style of piano playing, and many memories of an exuberant, witty and kindly personality.

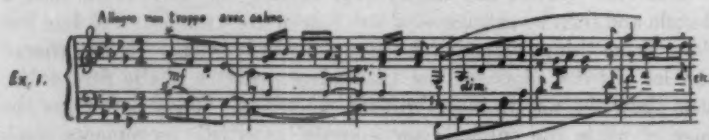
That this creative fire should burn brightly for little more than a decade and then be extinguished was indeed unfortunate. But fate has done worse things than that for Emmanuel Chabrier. He has shared the lot of those pioneers, not themselves geniuses of the first order, who show the way to more brilliant successors. These latter are the men of whom the public becomes aware, as artistic movements reach maturity. Such men may acknowledge their debts—both Debussy and Ravel have paid their tribute to Chabrier—but the pioneer and his works are none the less quietly and surely forgotten. To the

English musician who is not a keen amateur of the modern French school the name of Chabrier calls up *España*, and nothing more.

His two chief operas contain fine music, but their libretti duly killed them. Most of his piano pieces, and *España* itself (which was originally conceived in terms of the piano), belong to an unfortunate musical category. High spirits—unless in the newest idiom—do not appeal to superior critics. Such people, if a little old-fashioned, denounce them as trivial; if up to date, they smile loftily on them as "mere emotionalism." So that here again fate is against Chabrier. Really, there is much to be said for the literal truth of M. Jean-Aubry's dictum, whatever claims for the palm of unluckiness may be made on behalf of Bizet, Chausson, or others whose names occur to the mind.

As for the *Pièces pittoresques*, we reach them by a process of elimination. They were published in 1881, when the composer was in his fortieth year. With their companion, the *Bourrée fantasque*, they form a collection of piano music running to some 70 pages. Here we have not only the cream of his works for the instrument, but a concentrated picture of his musical nature. That accents of the German classics and romantics should be heard in these pieces is not surprising. Chabrier imbibed their influence as a matter of course. It was not for him to rediscover the clavecinistes. His nature drew him to the Beethoven of the scherzos, to Schumann, Mendelssohn and Chopin; while Wagner was a revelation to him—and no bad one, in 1881. His best works show, nevertheless, that he assimilated what he drew from his models; they speak his own musical language, one which is often, Wagner notwithstanding, as French as French can be.

It will be best to treat the *Pièces pittoresques* in their order of emotional intensity. Even so, the first of them, "Paysage," makes a good starting-point. Its general mood, its repetitions, and its square-cut rhythms distantly suggest the first movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. The descriptive motto of that movement, "the awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country," is not inappropriate to this opening strain:



and equally apt is Beethoven's proviso about his whole symphony, that it is "an expression of feeling" rather than "painting."

Chabrier could never write objective music, though he sometimes tried: a picturesque title, or a dance-title, only slightly defines and modifies the emotional content of his works. Here, the main mood is his fundamental one of good-humoured joy. Very rarely, as in the first two bars of this passage,



the atmosphere clouds for a moment, but here the main tune at once reassures us, and rapid modulations bring a spacious climax with the subject in the bass. The harmonic range of our second example is clearly post-Wagnerian. The throwing about of the subject brings some bold diatonic clashes (as in bars 7 and 10); in these the composer often takes peculiar delight. In "Sous bois" he is a few steps nearer to objectivity. Still, his wood is his own—one of peace and joy and broad spaces. Even humour creeps into it for a while. Through most of the piece there runs the murmuring bass figure shown in Example 3. The main melody swings gently over it, delicately festooned with wide arpeggios. From time to time little counterpoints echo across the space between. The ending brings us near to the heart of romance,





as the murmuring fades until nothing is left but the three notes of the common chord in the richest bass register of the pianoforte. The building of this chord is a triumphantly simple effect of *sostenuto*. As its last vibrations die we hear faint horns of elfland sounding from the farthest depths of the wood.

We shall now deal with two pieces in dance form. One of these, "Danse villageoise," has a tinge of objectivity. But this matters little—for if we are to think of rustics, Chabrier is clearly heart and soul with them in their revelry. He does not watch them from a distance, as Déodat de Séverac is apt to do, marking a gay rhythmic phrase with a deprecating *un peu vulgaire*. Chabrier's music never apologises. Here he begins by leaving his sturdy, vigorous theme unsupported for ten bars. The harmonies, when they come, are in keeping with it:



The bass goes charging down for two whole octaves, leaving clashes in its track which no doubt horrified the purists. A middle section in the major is more idyllic; it starts off with a jolly series of reiterated bare fifths. Even here, though, eventually, the bass charges down two octaves as before. As a rule, Chabrier distrusts the idyllic; he keeps it in its place with something stronger and more downright. Another dance piece, the "Scherzo-valse," was frequently heard

some years ago. It is a most vivacious work, leaping and flowing along in tarantella-like rhythms, and lying very pleasantly under the hands. Not a cloud steals over its airy radiance; the last ounce of German heaviness has been worked out of its technique. All the same, it preserves one habit of Beethoven in his scherzos, that of the humorously abrupt ending. Chabrier likes this, especially when he can manage it by dashing home through alien keys.

The superior critic may call the work empty, but this composer is apt to disconcert those who hastily decide that he is a trifler. What exactly is the mood of the "Idylle"? The writer confesses that he once thought it too Mendelssohnian. Harmonically, of course, it is more interesting than Mendelssohn could be; and it is deliciously written for the instrument. Still, it once seemed a piece of sentiment verging on sentimentality. But Cortot, last October, happened to play it in Manchester. The ingenuous melody, with its heart-full joy turning to plaintiveness, floated quietly down the hall; beneath it the repeated notes, the octave leaps, the sudden arpeggios that had seemed mere *remplissage*, scudded and sparkled:



The effect was one of fleeting beauty hard to describe. Somehow, we thought of that image of Keats,

"Joy, whose hand is ever on his lips,
Bidding adieu."

A kindred piece, "Mélancolie," is a trifle in length, but not in

meaning. It is a very definite mood-picture, the mood being a curious one of wistful sadness, tinged with foreboding and surprise :



The softly yielding rhythm, 9-8 alternating with 6-8, persists throughout. The use of canon as the work progresses is rare in Chabrier; it enhances the emotional effect in a manner suggestive of César Franck.

Alone among these pieces the "Improvisation" attains to passion. The title is justified, not by any unusual freedom of form, but by the rhapsodical way in which the composer seizes on his main ideas. The rhythm is again remarkably supple and sensitive. The opening bars,



prepare the hearer for the frequent alternation (and sometimes the combination) of duple and triple accents. A short chromatic bass figure comes threateningly on the scene, as some Wagnerian *leit-motif* might do. It plays an impressive part in a long and growingly rhapsodical climax, in which the melodic line streams out

into passionate arabesque, much as it does in Chopin's vehement moments :



Apart altogether from its emotional content, this work is a superb piece of pianoforte writing. Is there so much modern music of its type that it should be generally neglected? The French school has stores of delicate and elaborate objective art. It has not too much of this glowing, forthright passion.

We have now surveyed the most important of the ten *Pièces pittoresques*. It is time to remember that second dictum of M. Jean-Aubry. Can even the best of them be ranked with the piano works of Debussy and Ravel? As absolute, durable art, surely not. In range and beauty of technical invention, these composers tower; theirs is a rarer, more individual musical language. Let us admit that Ravel is often "precious," Debussy often laborious, inert, mechanical. Yet in just their language, and in no other, could the former have written "*Miroirs*," the latter, "*Reflets dans l'eau*," or "*La cathédrale engloutie*." The paths they cleared in the land of music may be byways, but they are byways of unique enchantment.

It is only fair, at this point, to hear the devil's advocate on the subject of Chabrier.

Among his weaknesses is a tendency to the old "top and bottom" style of technique. The hollow, ugly effect of a wide gap between the two hands—the effect which made Debussy hope that Beethoven *heard* a middle part even when he didn't write one—is noticeable in "*Paysage*," in the "*Menuet pompeux*," and elsewhere. In the composer's best pieces, especially in the "*Improvisation*," this fault hardly exists; he inclines here to Chopin's more equable distribution of the hands on the keyboard. Allied to this tendency to hollowness, is an over-fondness for unison effects. A passage like Example 1 is pleasant enough, with the hands only an octave apart. But elsewhere, as likely as not, they will be two octaves apart, with a few perfunctory harmonies thrown in. This nearly ruins "*Tourbillon*," one of the weaker pieces; there is quite enough

of it in the "Danse villageoise." Chabrier's bass parts rather disdain their ordinary duties. Here and there, as in the "Improvisation," they can move nobly; the composer's exhilaration, at its strongest, will send any part cutting its way keenly through the musical texture. But too often, elsewhere, he is content with unisons, or with pedal-points and their equivalents. The liveliness of his musical impulse also leads him to sprinkle grace-notes and such little etceteras too freely. He sometimes did this, of course, for exotic colouring, as in "Mauresque" and the "Habanera" transcription, which both sound faded to-day. Here and elsewhere this mere "spiciness" betrays a flaw in his taste.

All these faults are at root temperamental; they are those of the impulsive artist who enjoys himself in his music, never treating it as a solemn duty. The fiery life of Chabrier's impulse can even put a glow into a musical language partly outworn. One splendid piece, the *Bourrée fantasque*, remains to be analysed. It shows the composer almost wholly at his best, and will help to reassure us after the adversary's plea. We quote the main theme in its first harmonised form:



This subject is thrown about with great vigour; it is contrasted with another one of quieter character, which goes through some delightful modulations:





The lithe, athletic writing of this piece is a joy; no less fine are the resource and the variety of its treatment, the bright play of its changing key-colour, the ever keener jostling of humour and beauty, rhythmic life and melodic charm, as it whirls on to its vertiginous ending.

We can use these last two examples to illustrate a technical peculiarity already hinted at, one which had considerable influence on Chabrier's younger successors. This is his way of drawing chromatic lines through his texture. We can see him smile at the clash of C with B natural in Example 9, emphasised by the preliminary scale. This passage is simple compared with the last bars of Example 10, where we hear faintly, for a moment, the characteristic modern crackle of dissonances taken at a rapid pace. This feature was no doubt one which Debussy and Ravel appreciated in Chabrier. To develop it fully, however, did not suit them: they preferred, Debussy especially, to exploit sliding block effects, in which the discords, though sometimes fairly acute, are softened to the ear by similar motion. We must turn to Poulenc and others of the younger French school, and to such English composers as Lord Berners and Eugene Goossens, to find this tendency of Chabrier carried to its logical extreme. This marshalled array of converging chromatics, from *The Kaleidoscope*,



may one day find its way into the text-books.

Yet to insist at any length on technical principles is out of place in an essay on Chabrier. Such principles are too often mechanically

applied. The fine zest of his musical personality was his chief gift to the world. Déodat de Séverac paid tribute to him in his last pianoforte work, *Sous les lauriers roses*, published in 1920. In that delightful medley of the festive and the idyllic, we find a long section "Pour E. Chabrier," founded on this droll, good-humoured strain :



which may serve as a miniature portrait of the older master, drawn by an ardent disciple. It has a rollicking, almost a dissipated air; it dances along for pages, with Chabrier's own zestful fluency, his rhythmic life, his nimble, athletic style of writing for the instrument. An older comrade in music, F. L. Joncières, wrote of "the inexhaustible verve, the bedevilled rhythms" of *Le Roi Malgré Lui*. All testimonies sound the praise of this abounding energy.

It sets the folk-dances of *España* leaping with a joy that makes the heart beat. Here the composer's native energy was freshened by contact with the true home of the dance. The influence of Spain has strengthened French musicians from Bizet onwards; it has helped to keep them spontaneous, and has armed them against their fondness for the hothouse culture of the doctrinaire. This debt to Spain, shared by Chabrier with Bizet and so many others, has now been amply repaid. The French school has greatly influenced the development of younger Spanish composers like Turina and De Falla.

Thus the impact of Chabrier on the musical world of his day produced a somewhat complicated set of reactions. Yet his place in the hierarchy of French composers is clear. He belongs to the first of the two great races which M. Romain Rolland has distinguished among them, to the lineage of Berlioz and Bizet, to the France of impulse, zest, humour and prodigality. This race has its roots far back, in sixteenth century composers such as Jannequin the madrigalist; its prototype in French literature is Rabelais. *Fay ce que voudras* is the very spirit of Chabrier's pianoforte music. Frank, revelling joy, lyric beauty, accesses of surprised melancholy; these

must all have their way, but not usually to any sentimental excess. Mocking humour—that sublimated form of good sense—is always lying in wait. This was something of a triumph in so keen a student of Wagner, for Wagner's excesses of emotion hopelessly swamp his sense of the ridiculous. Even in the *Idylle*, even in *Mélancolie*, Chabrier's sentiment is not of the self-indulgent kind. We deceive ourselves if we think that the composer's hard fate ever got into his art. Misgivings pass, and his laugh rings out, until the hour strikes and for him there is no more music.

That other race of French composers is more deliberate, and more restrained; it believes in economy of means, in clearness and delicacy, and in wit rather than humour. It is of the lineage of the clavecinistes: its literary parallels are in the *grand siècle*. But without Chabrier, would Debussy and Ravel have been as we know them? The careful tracks of the later band of adventurers are steadily obliterating the traces of the pioneer. These pages may help to keep fresh the most accessible and not the least good of that pioneer's compositions. The labour is not superfluous. For we admit once more that fate was against him.

W. WRIGHT ROBERTS.

WILLIAM BYRD

1543—1623

ON July 4, 1623, at the ripe age of eighty, a great Englishman died in the person of William Byrd. The question is sometimes asked whether the custom of observing anniversaries and centenaries of the births and deaths of notable figures in art or literature is truly beneficial to their memories, and whether it does not sometimes tend to give an artificial appraisal of the value of their work. Dangers such as this do certainly beset the keeping of centenaries, and they should always be carefully guarded against. On the other hand, the special prominence which is given to poets or musicians by calling public attention to their individual achievements from time to time invites fresh consideration and criticism which must make for a truer estimate of the actual value of their work. A centenary may conceivably bring about the fall of an idol and the worship of a false god may be exposed, but more often it will bring to light treasures that have been concealed and awaken in the public mind an appreciation which had lain dormant.

The wisdom of commemorating the tercentenary of the death of the greatest of the Elizabethan composers cannot be disputed, for the neglect which his name and his work have suffered for at least two and a half centuries is scarcely believable. The revival of interest in the music of the Tudor composers in the last decade or so has been very remarkable, yet the name of Byrd is still unknown to the vast majority of English people, and even in musical circles a widespread ignorance prevails with regard to his compositions. It is to be hoped that the efforts that are being made throughout the English-speaking world to do honour to William Byrd this year may result in securing for him a more permanent place in the minds of his countrymen, and may lead to more frequent performance and more general recognition of his splendid music.

The earliest fact that we know for certain about Byrd is his appointment to the organistship of Lincoln Cathedral about the year 1563. In his will, dated November 30, 1622, he stated that he was in his eightieth year, from which the inference may be drawn that he was born in the year 1543. His early connection with Lincoln Cathedral, coupled with the fact that Byrd was not an uncommon

name in the county, suggests that he was a native of Lincolnshire, and other particulars lead to the conjecture that he belonged to a family residing at Epworth. The statement, sometimes made, that he was a chorister of St. Paul's Cathedral has no evidence to support it. Wood's assertion that he was "bred up to musick under Thomas Tallis" is probably accurate, for it seems to be confirmed by Ferdinand Richardson's appreciation, in Latin elegiac verse, printed at the beginning of the Tallis-Byrd *Cantiones Sacrae*, published in 1575. Byrd held his Lincoln appointment until the end of 1572, although in 1569 he had been elected a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, sharing with Tallis the duties of organist. He held office in the Chapel Royal until his death.

In the year 1578 Byrd was living at Harlington, in West Middlesex, and he had a house there for at least ten years; but before the end of the century he became possessed of Stondon Place, in Essex, an estate which had been sequestered from a man named Shelley. For several years after this Byrd was mainly occupied in disputes with the Shelley family about this property, but he had powerful influence behind him and was able to uphold his claim. In his will he expressed a desire to be buried at Stondon, where his wife already lay, and there can be little doubt that his bones lie in Stondon Churchyard. Unfortunately, the parish registers of that date have not survived, and no actual record of his burial can be found. In connection with the tercentenary celebrations, it is proposed that a suitable memorial tablet should be placed in Stondon Church.

The association of Tallis and Byrd was not limited to their joint holding of this office. Together they held a patent granted by Queen Elizabeth which secured for them special privileges, amounting to a monopoly, for printing and selling music and music-paper. They were also associated in producing a set of *Cantiones Sacrae* in 1575, consisting of a number of Latin motets by each of them. Various eulogistic notices at the beginning of this set indicate the leading position which these two composers jointly held in the musical world of their day. One of these describes them as the "parents" of British music.

Living as he did through many stages of religious controversy, it would seem that Byrd held liberal views in such matters. In his will he described himself as having been throughout his life "a true member of the holy Catholic Church." It must not necessarily be inferred from this that he was what is now called a "Roman Catholic." The term was used in the Book of Common Prayer, not only in the Creed as an exact translation of the Latin phrase, but also in the prayer "for all sorts and conditions of men." It is true that

both he and his wife were frequently fined as "recusants," but he was never disqualified for his appointments at Lincoln Cathedral and the Chapel Royal. Whatever his precise convictions may have been, Byrd was certainly no bigot, for he wrote much magnificent music both for the English and Latin rites of the Church. There can be no doubt that the three glorious Masses were written for performance and that they were performed, with varying degrees of secrecy perhaps, at the time when they were first printed in Elizabeth's reign; and it was with an equally sincere and devotional mind that Byrd wrote his splendid "Great Service" for the English rites. Nor was he considering controversial details of doctrine when writing either his fine Latin motets, or his equally fine English anthems, such as "This day Christ was born," and his exquisite setting of Psalm 51 to English words.

One of the most striking features of Byrd's music is its variety; indeed, it is this feature almost more than any other which marks him out so pre-eminently among the composers of the polyphonic school. As far as is known, Byrd wrote no more than three Masses, whereas Palestrina wrote at least ninety; but Palestrina's work, with the exception of some madrigals, was almost entirely limited to Church music. Byrd, on the other hand, extended his interests in many directions. His Masses and his four books of motets were designed for the Latin rites of the Church, while something like seventy or eighty English anthems of his have survived, besides two Morning and four Evening "Services," in addition to settings of the Preces, Responses and Litany of the Book of Common Prayer and some English "Salmi Concerti." In the realm of secular music there are the madrigalian compositions included in the three volumes which were published in 1588, 1589, and 1611 respectively. He also wrote a few solo-songs and duets with accompaniment for viols. Besides all this, Byrd did work of the highest importance in the realm of instrumental music; his chamber works for strings show an amazing grasp of some of the leading principles of musical "form." The Fantasia for string sextet in the 1611 book is especially interesting in this connection, quite apart from its very melodious character. It consists of three distinct and well-contrasted movements which are strung together without any break, and the work closes with a small coda. All the movements are in the same key, but so were the suites and early sonatas of the next century. The scheme of modulations in the bright little movement in the middle of this work is of surprising interest in relation to the history of "form" in musical compositions: opening in G minor, it passes to B flat major; then back through C major to a close in G major; then through

C major to F major, G minor, D minor, D major, to end in G major. And the importance of Byrd's contribution to the music of keyed instruments, as represented by the virginal in his day, cannot be emphasised too strongly. If Byrd and Tallis were "parents" of British music, Byrd certainly may be regarded as a father of pianoforte music. Byrd was one of the first composers, if not the actual first, to develop "variation" form, and many of his virginal pieces take the form of themes with variations. A very large amount of Byrd's virginal music has survived, and a complete edition in practical form would be a valuable contribution to the literature of keyed instruments.

Within the limits of this article it will not be possible to attempt a critical survey of Byrd's music as a whole, but a few general observations may be made. Byrd himself claims to have framed his music "to the life of the words," and he made his claim good, for the words and their exact meaning were always the foremost thing in the composer's mind, and he succeeded in a wonderful measure in finding musical phrases which exactly fitted the rhythm of the words and expressed their meaning. Then, again, Byrd could build up magnificent long musical phrases; no better example of such a phrase could be given than that at the beginning of the three-voice Sanctus, the base-part of which must always give an intense thrill to the singer as he performs it; and glorious long phrases, showing great beauty of curve, are to be found over and over again in the "Great" Service and, of course, in the motets. And in spite of the very limited scope for modulation prevailing in those days, Byrd could secure wonderful effects by this device. Nothing, for example, could be more exactly expressive, without the least suggestion of theatrical effect such as later composers contrived to produce, than the phrase "And was crucified" in the Creed of the "Great" Service.

Byrd was held in the highest esteem by the musicians of his own day, and this circumstance makes it all the more remarkable that his music should subsequently have been so unduly neglected. He was the one English Church musician whose work seems to have been known on the Continent; and it is noteworthy that in old collections of Latin motets Byrd's work is often represented where the rest of the collection is by foreign composers.

John Dowland was, of course, an English contemporary of Byrd who enjoyed a European reputation, but his fame rested solely on his songs and his lute-playing; he wrote no Church music of any importance. Morley, who was one of Byrd's pupils, expressed the highest admiration for his old master, who, he said, was "never

without reverence to be named of the musicians." Thomas Tomkins, another famous pupil, calls him his "much revered master"; and various eulogistic notes have been appended to his compositions by scribes like John Baldwin. When he died, his death was recorded, according to custom, in the cheque-book of the Chapel Royal; but the bare statement of fact did not satisfy the official who entered it. This was an exceptional case, a very great man had passed away. Was he not a "father of music"? So he added this note, that we and all who come after might know it, and that we too might "name him with reverence."

E. H. FELLOWES.

CASALS AS CONDUCTOR

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TWICE a year Señor Casals returns to his native Barcelona, and spends five or six weeks rehearsing and conducting an orchestra which bears his name in a season of six concerts. I had the privilege of taking part in one of these concerts recently, and of following three weeks' rehearsals. There were two of these every day at the unusual hours of 2.30 and 9.45 p.m. Spaniards never seem to go to sleep, and it was not unusual to see members of the orchestra strolling away from the rehearsal at 12.15 a.m. and sitting down on seats on the boulevard, when a less acclimatised foreigner was hurrying to his bed.

Rehearsals lasted two hours and a half, and there was always an interval of a quarter of an hour. It can readily be seen that the result of nine such rehearsals on an orchestra consisting of musicians perfectly competent to take their place in any symphony orchestra in Europe (although it is interesting to note that only one member was not a native of Barcelona) would be performances of the most uncommon perfection of ensemble and dullness, unless they were managed with considerable skill, and I venture to think a description of this will be of interest to all musicians, for the rehearsals were really lessons, and Casals the teacher is no less eminent than Casals the player.

He took the works in cycles, though not necessarily beginning with the most difficult. Starting with a run through without a stop, he would then immediately rehearse the work in close detail, and this was, of course, the most interesting time, for he would sometimes spend ten minutes on two or three bars with one instrument or group alone. It is interesting to note that the Spanish temperament makes it possible for the rest of the orchestra to sit in perfect silence without even a surreptitious puff at a cigarette during an interval of this kind. I actually counted 19 repetitions of the chromatic scale in the middle of the Scherzo of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music, where each division of the string department has two bars of the scale as it runs through four octaves. When he had finished the details of one work, he would carry on with this process with the rest of the programme.

Then began a second repetition of the whole cycle; starting sometimes with a few special passages, but usually going straight through

with stops wherever necessary. This would go on until the concert. No work was ever perfect, and there always seemed fresh details to attend to.*

It may be of interest to go through some of the special points which occurred in Casals' methods of rehearsing.

1. EXECUTION. On the slightest want of clearness, whether in an inner part or a more obvious passage, Casals would stop and often ask the orchestra to find their own way through by means of separate practice for a few minutes. He would then take the passage together, and it was remarkable how the development of the passage from a rough scramble to a finished performance was always based on the need, not only for correctness of intonation, rhythm and so on, but on the style of the work as a whole. The same rhythmic figure occurring in a work by Schubert and in a work by Tchaikovsky would be handled in a totally different manner. Modern works were given a certain freedom, but a mathematical exactness of rhythm would put glowing life into the classics. It was a thrilling experience to hear how a simple figure like the first subject of the Schubert C major Symphony, or the minim-followed-by-crotchet so often found in classical scherzos, played in *absolutely* strict time, gained in character and point.

I felt the full result of this at once myself at the first rehearsal of Butterworth's First Idyll, when the dotted-quaver-followed-by-semi-quaver, which occurs so much in that work, was played in perfect rhythm, giving it its right character at the outset. A further result of this was that where passages are split up in different parts, the absolute regularity of the playing at once brought the right things to the surface, although no pains were spared in working out details when necessary. Matters of bowing, and sometimes, too, of fingering, were often discussed, and in all important passages the strings bowed together. This was arranged by the fine leader of the orchestra, Mr. Casals' younger brother.

2. EXPRESSION. Here, again, as one followed the rehearsals it was continually obvious that Casals' attitude towards every detail was built up on the style of the work as a whole. Quality of tone, attack and release, chording (that is to say whether the notes of the chord were of equal force, or whether one was made more prominent)—the management of all these things was dictated, not by any arbitrary rule, but by the expression of the particular work in hand. Everything was explained, every member of the orchestra was made to feel the

* Readers of the very interesting letter on "How to Practise a String Quartet," in the October number of MUSIC AND LETTERS, will notice how closely the Casals method corresponds with that of the Hungarian Quartet.

passage himself in its inevitable relation to the expression of the moment and the style of the whole work. In this respect Casals was the exact opposite of Nikisch, who exaggerated everything at rehearsal, probably rehearsing slower than he meant to perform, in order that the quicker pace and greater tension of performance should allow these details to drop into their proportionate places.

3. MANAGEMENT OF REHEARSAL.

(a) Rehearsals always started with elaborate tuning of wind and string instruments—the "a" of each wind instrument was heard and passed, and the strings were given special time as well.

(b) Want of letters in the parts never seemed to interfere with rehearsing. He would go back 40 or 50 bars after a stoppage, and this would have the double advantage of confirming some previous point and allowing the element of forgetfulness to creep in before the passage under discussion was again approached, thereby ensuring its permanent improvement.

(c) Certain cuts were made in the Schubert Symphony, but these were only put in at the last rehearsal. The Symphony as a whole was thoroughly rehearsed before it was cut.

(d) We have noticed already how the players never seemed to mind waiting while a special part was being rehearsed. Extreme examples of this were the cases of instruments like double bassoon and harp who, though attending every rehearsal (as the programme of rehearsals was never known), would sit as attentive listeners in the front of the house until the very end. This point was specially noticed by Monsieur Cortot (who played a Concerto with the orchestra at a later concert), in a delightful notice written for *Le Monde Musical*.

4. The STICK. Mr. Casals used a heavy stick, and no pretence was made of the modern type of virtuoso conducting with all the expression shown with the point of the stick, as we must do in England where rehearsals are so few. It is surely better to make an orchestra feel the right expression by means of real rehearsing than to rely on the last moment to get the effect needed. But this is a much harder task with modern work of the more brilliant type, and here one feels there are certain effects which can only be secured by a light stick held by a loose wrist and fingers. But what is brilliance in modern work compared to performances of the classics which convince all hearers that they are inevitably right? Classical music has stood the test of time, and we know, therefore, that it is good, and when a work like the C major Symphony can be made so moving that the whole audience is spellbound, and a rather jumpy executive musician even forgets throughout its performance that he has got to go and take charge of the next number on the programme, it is surely an achievement worth far more than mere clever stick work of a modern conductor. Out of every dozen musicians who excel in modern work, it would be rare to

ADRIAN C. BOULT.

A PLEA FOR OPERA IN ENGLISH

OPERA from the British singers' point of view is much misunderstood. We have a bad reputation, somewhat deservedly I fear, for limited outlook, interest in musical unessentials and general ignorance. This reputation luckily applies to the singers of all nationalities or our state would be even worse. It is sometimes forgotten, however, that a singer attains maturity before finding a voice at all and has perhaps concentrated his early manhood on baking bread, selling hats, or adding up figures, and the voice part of him is often discovered too late to prevent him from keeping on with his real vocation, which is possibly not singing.

The question of the future of our native vocal art is, however, a serious one. The training schools are pouring out pupils at an alarming rate and one trembles to think what will become of the Pattis from the Rhondda Valley and the Carusos from the West Riding who set out with such glorious hopes. Our old standby, oratorio, is undoubtedly passing. Twenty years ago the aim of the serious British singer was festivals, oratorios, concerts, and delightful things like Harrison tours, with the faint hope that one might be allowed to go on at Covent Garden in opera and sing "My Lord, the carriage waits," in a foreign language.

Nowadays even these small, though worthy, ambitions are much more difficult of attainment. Festivals are few, the great choral societies are balancing their budgets on their *Messiah* profits, and though musical activity is very much greater than it was, the time seems ripe for a great effort to be made for London to found and maintain a permanent opera in English. By opera I mean, of course, the great music dramas of all nations performed in our native language and eventually—and this is the crux of the whole matter—the production of our own music dramas which will take their place in the operatic *répertoire* of the world.

The public interest is growing tremendously, grand opera societies are springing up all over the country and the immense audiences that have attended the National Opera Company's performances and the Carl Rosa Company's at Covent Garden recently, and in the provinces, show in the most certain manner that the public want and will support opera.

The vexed question of the language in which operas should be sung has long been a matter of controversial opinion. There can be no question whatever about the ideal state of affairs, which means, of course, every opera in its native tongue, but as there is not the faintest possibility of this ideal being realised in this country, except perhaps for a brief cosmopolitan season, would it not be better to accept the fact and concentrate our best energies on giving opera in our native language and in the best possible way?

There is a noisy minority to whom opera in English is anathema. I venture to think that in many cases this arises from the fact that opera in English has so often been badly done and also from a certain snobbishness that will never allow that anything native can be really first-class. Covent Garden Opera House, too, is not the best place to begin such a venture; it is full of the memories and ghosts of glorious days departed—ghosts of the giants of the past who grow in stature with each succeeding year and memories that gain in beauty as they recede into time; detrimental comparisons therefore are natural and inevitable. One has the greatest sympathy with the man who lives in these memories and who says that unless opera be first-class—i.e., Italian, German or French—he will have none of it; but sympathy and understanding for this point of view must not blind us to the need of something permanent, sound and fine in the way of opera in our native tongue to meet the ever growing demand. It is the latter need that will eventually solve our opera problem and, incidentally, is solving it now.

It is from this soil that great things will grow. Personally, I am one of the optimists who think that this country will add valuable assets to music drama if only opera can be made by our people for our people, and taken clean away from the "star worshipping" cosmopolitan clique who have ruled the roost for so long. Unfortunately we, having no sturdy and permanent opera in London, have not been in a position to dictate to the foreign singer our conditions about language; he has dictated to us. I think we shall soon be in a position to alter this and the sooner the better.

Nobody expects to hear *Die Walküre* sung in German at the Paris Grand Opera or at La Scala, Milan. One accepts the French and Italian translations as a matter of course, and I wonder whether one word of French has ever been heard from the stage of the Royal Opera, Berlin. Some of the French that used to be perpetrated by the Italian artists at Covent Garden would never have been tolerated from a native artist, but it was "foreign" and therefore passed. As soon as we can make it worth while for the great Continental singers to sing in English they will do so, with inestimable benefit

to all. This, I maintain, will only be possible by concentrating on our performances in English and striving by every possible means to make them really representative and worthy; worthy of ourselves and of the distinguished guests we ought to hear and have with us from time to time.

Is, then, a plea for us to sink our differences, join our forces, and make a mighty push to forward and found opera in our own tongue a worthy ideal? I venture to think that it is.

It is so easy to throw bricks and so difficult to build anything these days. The whole world seems to be concerned with pulling down. Cynicism never built any thing and never will, and though it may be a tonic to a thriving and healthy being who is getting a little beyond himself it can only harm the growing and bashful child. If people would help more in the building of the scheme of opera in English and talk less about the inadequacy of the effort something would soon be done that mattered.

The loss of the star singer who would not sing in English (which would be only for a little time) would be more than balanced by the raising of the standard of our native performances and bring far greater results for all concerned in music. There is no question of nationality in the practice of music itself: the same notation and staff, the same orchestral instruments, the same method of conducting obtain from Petrograd to San Francisco. Why, then, cannot English take its place as an operatic language and thus link us up with Continental operatic affairs?

The important matter of translations must have much more consideration. In too many cases it has been handed out by the publisher like the washing, when it ought to have been dealt with by an expert committee of literary man, conductor and singer. The immense pains that Sir Thomas Beecham took over the translations of the operas he wished to present showed that, as always, he was intensely alive to this great need. To mention one experience of my own: At the time when *Boris* was to be performed in English, the original Russian version, the French, German, and Italian versions, the excellent English translation of Mrs. Newmarch, were all open at the same place before us for comparison and reference in the endeavour to find the exact word to fit the musical phrase and to see how other translators had dealt with the matter.

One cannot ignore the fact that there are some operas that will not translate. They are not many, however, and if an opera's appeal is deep enough it will soon make its way in any language. Why not, then, in English? An opera must stand on its merits as music and drama in all languages. If an opera seems too native and subtle to

bear translation, then time alone must prove its value. The matter of really adequate and poetic translations will do much to solve the opera problem.

A word on the economic side of opera in English. It is obvious that no permanent opera can afford to pay "fancy" salaries to its *regular* employees if it is a permanent affair, but it can so make an artist's reputation that he or she will benefit enormously by association therewith, exactly as on the Continent. It has always proved true that success with the late Beecham Company and later with its successor has meant a great advance in the young artist's status, and opened innumerable doors and given immense opportunities in music making outside opera. During the last few years the little list of festival singers has been added to almost entirely from the operatic stage. The names of Rosina Buckman, Carrie Tubb, Florence Austral, Olga Haley, Frank Mullings and Norman Allin come readily to the mind—all most valuable national assets, who might still be charming the audience on the "pier at Wigan" or buried in concert parties had opera not offered them their opportunity.

Idealism is not quite dead when some of the best orchestral players in the world will go on tour at a considerable loss in fees in order to do their part in founding what they feel is a national musical need and Dame Nellie Melba's magnificent gesture recently shows what she thinks about it. To discuss the immense question of opera from merely a singer's standpoint is perhaps hardly worth while, but only by putting the singer's point of view forward can the difficulties of opera-giving in this country be thoroughly understood. Even singers have their ideals, and mine is:—

A permanent opera in English in London, one or even two touring companies equally well equipped as to chorus and orchestra and small parts, with interchangeable principals and conductors, and subsidised by a fund of small yearly subscriptions by opera lovers all over the country.

This fund to be administered by a select committee of well-known music-loving business men for the production of new British works or any great and pressing economic need that might suddenly arise.

The greatest international artists and conductors to be guest performers.

A school of diction that is accepted as standard English, and officially published English translations.

A linking up with substantial support from the great teaching schools of music.

These things would be worth doing and I hardly see how they could fail. We have been the dumping-ground for everything in the

artistic line for as long as I can remember, and after paying the piper all these years it is about time we began to call the tune. We have been talked down to by the Germans, patronised by the Italians, and laughed at by the French for long enough in matters operatic, and it is time we took our operatic destinies away from the fashionable clique on the one hand and dividend-grabbing theatrical interests on the other and gave the people what they want, *Opera in English*.

ROBERT RADFORD.

THE WIRELESS TRANSMISSION OF MUSIC

THE recent broadcasting of the music of grand opera at the instant of its performance at Covent Garden has arrested the attention and stimulated the imagination of numbers of people, including many lovers of good music, who had possibly regarded "wireless" as a new craze of no musical importance. The achievement forces the method upon the consideration of any who take pleasure in the hearing of music, and still more of those who have the musical education of the people at heart. The question of the selection and arrangement of the daily programmes being, or to be, sent out from eight centres in England and Scotland, is obviously one which must have a very great bearing on the improvement or otherwise of national musical taste, and in a country with a greater perception of the importance of such things to mankind, here were work for a Ministry of Fine Arts, could it contrive to avoid pedantry.

For those who have not yet had an opportunity of listening to the opera transmissions or the daily programmes sent from the broadcasting studios, it may be said that solos, whether vocal or instrumental, come through with a faithfulness unequalled by any gramophone or the electrophone provided no attempt is made to magnify the received sounds to any great extent. To listen, for example, to the speeches made at the Burns' anniversary dinner, was absolutely uncanny, for here the mere fact that the speaker was not in the artificial surroundings of the broadcasting room, produced a naturalness which, combined with the general noises of the assembled diners as a background, was quite extraordinary.

When it comes to orchestral pieces, and in the case of the opera, there is at present an almost complete absence of the bass element. Drums seem to lack all resonance and sound like the knocking of a small hammer. The lower strings and wind instruments practically disappear. So also with the deeper voices of the chorus. These defects are probably due to a variety of causes capable of fairly easy remedy. The electrical instruments used for transmission have been designed and tested chiefly for speech and solo work and the opera experiment was undertaken at short notice. A simple re-distribution of the microphones about the stage and orchestra at the Opera House might have caused an improvement. Doubtless attention will be

given to the matter and development should be rapid, for many minds are concentrated upon giving the best possible service and the Broadcasting Company asks especially for the criticisms of musicians.

My present object, however, is not to criticise what is being done, but in the first place to call attention to it as a matter for serious consideration, and then to try and give a brief explanation of the underlying principles of the transmission, so that the word "wireless" may carry some more intelligible ideas to those interested in its results than the mere negation of wire, itself sufficiently mysterious as a means of conveying sound.

Probably most readers of this Quarterly have a certain knowledge of the mechanism of sound transmission from an instrument to the ear. It is, of course, a "wireless" transmission, though it never occurs to anyone to call it by so foolish a name. The string of the instrument, the reed of the pipe, or the chords of the throat, set up vibrations of the air; that is to say, there radiate out from the disturbing source alternate compressions and rarefactions of the air, travelling in all directions like ripples on the surface of a pond. These impinge upon the drum of the ear so that it is pressed in when a compression arrives and relaxed by the following region of reduced pressure. Thus the drum of the ear vibrates in exact accord or tune with the string or other source of the disturbance. What we call sound is strictly the effect produced on the brain by these movements of the ear drum. What passes from the instrument to the ear is not sound, but a succession of air waves of a certain frequency and intensity.

Here we have a very perfect analogy of the electric radiation which is used for communicating over longer distances than can be effected by direct sound, or air waves. "Wireless" is no whit more mysterious or incomprehensible than sound. It is communication by wires that is an unusual idea. "Radio" telephony, therefore, or telephony by means of electric radiation, becomes primarily a question of the mere increase of the distance to which the initial disturbance can be transmitted. And electricity is for mankind mainly a form of energy convenient for long distance transmission. As electricity it is useless, but the energy of coal, of waterfalls, of oil, or of wind, can be transmitted to our trains and trams and workshops for power, or to our houses for light and heat, more readily and conveniently in electrical form than as coal or wind. Once conveyed to its destination it must be re-converted into heat, light or moving matter before it can be so much as known to us.

Hence the obvious solution of the long distance transmission of sound is to convert the sound energy into electrical energy, and

whether that energy shall be *radiated* like sound itself or passed along wires, as sound may be passed through a speaking tube, is a secondary consideration depending on the circumstances.

Let us go back one stage and, since air waves are invisible and therefore difficult to visualise, consider the less close analogy of waves or ripples in a liquid. A fish lives in water and is probably quite unaware of its existence except as its waves displace him. So natural man knows nothing of the air except when it blows upon him, and the wind he seems to regard as a separate entity. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." We should, therefore, have no difficulty in conceiving that we live in another sea, neither air nor water, which is not only all round us, but penetrating all things as water penetrates a sponge. This sea has been called "æther," and it is the medium which brings us heat and light from the sun and stars. A star is to the æther as a fiddle string to the air. The star vibrates and the æther vibrating with it carries ripples at incredible speed to our eyes. The resulting effect on the brain we call light.

Now a musical note is the effect produced on the brain by a steady succession of impulses to the ear drum at a regular frequency. The greater the frequency the higher the note. But not all regular impulses produce this effect. They may be too fast or too slow and consequently inaudible at one end or other of the scale. In a word, the range of the human ear as a detector of air vibrations is limited to comparatively few octaves. In the same way the range of the human eye is limited in its detection of æther waves to a matter of about one octave and a half. The highest frequency gives the effect of violet light, the lowest, of red light. Then comes the curious phenomenon, that still lower frequencies begin to affect not the eye but the sense of feeling. Thus we get heat from the sun by means of what we may call the lower notes of the scale of æther vibration. The energy merely affects a different sense, or detector in the body.

Many hundreds of octaves down this scale come the vibrations which are set up by radio, or wireless, transmitters; but they are of the same nature as light and travel at the same speed, which is equivalent to over seven times round the equator in one second. Picturing these waves as ripples on a pond, those sent out by the London Broadcasting Station measure about 400 yards from crest to crest, whereas the ripple of violet light is measured in fractions of a millionth part of an inch.

Picture then, in the first instance, a machine capable of stirring up this sea of æther and sending out a steady series of waves such as have just been described. This is called a "carrier wave" and is

our vehicle of communication. Let us now impress upon these waves a series of characters, as wax may bear an impress which conveys a complex idea very different from mere wax. Let this impression be continuous, as the film of a moving picture is in effect continuous, and the wave will carry with it our communication, whatever it may be, to be read off at the other end.

This is the manner of radio telephony, without reference to the devices used for converting the sound waves into electric waves at the transmitting end and back again to air waves at the receiver; but as a mental picture not too far removed from truth we may picture a violinist drawing his bow across the strings and setting up air vibrations and thereby controlling the vibrations of an ætherial fiddle, of immensely greater power, which in turn radiates in æther an exact copy of the air vibrations. These travel everywhere, passing easily through material objects, as sea waves through sponge, and wherever they find something they can move, as a wave can move tadpoles, setting them dancing to the ripple. Now the things they find which they can move are called "free electrons," and these are only to be found in appreciable quantities in metals. Hence the aerial wire which is spread out in the path of the waves. The wire is a very, very open sponge to these waves and the free electrons in it are able to move in the open spaces but not to escape from the wire. They therefore float up and down in the wire according to the form of the passing ripples, which form is the form of the originating sound. They constitute an electric current and will therefore reproduce sound if, after suitable treatment, they are passed through an ordinary telephone receiver. Were our eyes but able to extend their scale, what strange music would we now see all round us, for æther waves can affect the eye directly; but the converse is not true, the ear is only open to material disturbances and we can never hope to hear pictures. It seems a paradox that we have not yet learnt to convey sight, which is already electric, by electrical means, while we have converted material sound into ætheric light and so conveyed it half-way round the globe. But the future surely holds this also in store. Perhaps we may yet be robbed of what some think to be one of the advantages of the new method of hearing opera!

H. R. RIVERS MOORE.

This article was placed in my hands as a result of a visit to the General Wireless office in Garrick Street, where I heard two acts of *Aida*.—[Ed.]

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Many hundreds of octaves down this scale come the vibrations which are set up by radio, or wireless, transmitters; but they are of the same nature as light and travel at the same speed, which is equivalent to over seven times round the equator in one second. Picturing these waves as ripples on a pond, those sent out by the London Broadcasting Station measure about 400 yards from crest to crest, whereas the ripple of violet light is measured in fractions of a millionth part of an inch.

Picture then, in the first instance, a machine capable of stirring up this sea of æther and sending out a steady series of waves such as have just been described. This is called a "carrier wave" and is

our vehicle of communication. Let us now impress upon these waves a series of characters, as wax may bear an impress which conveys a complex idea very different from mere wax. Let this impression be continuous, as the film of a moving picture is in effect continuous, and the wave will carry with it our communication, whatever it may be, to be read off at the other end.

This is the manner of radio telephony, without reference to the devices used for converting the sound waves into electric waves at the transmitting end and back again to air waves at the receiver; but as a mental picture not too far removed from truth we may picture a violinist drawing his bow across the strings and setting up air vibrations and thereby controlling the vibrations of an ætherial fiddle, of immensely greater power, which in turn radiates in æther an exact copy of the air vibrations. These travel everywhere, passing easily through material objects, as sea waves through sponge, and wherever they find something they can move, as a wave can move tadpoles, setting them dancing to the ripple. Now the things they find which they can move are called "free electrons," and these are only to be found in appreciable quantities in metals. Hence the aerial wire which is spread out in the path of the waves. The wire is a very, very open sponge to these waves and the free electrons in it are able to move in the open spaces but not to escape from the wire. They therefore float up and down in the wire according to the form of the passing ripples, which form is the form of the originating sound. They constitute an electric current and will therefore reproduce sound if, after suitable treatment, they are passed through an ordinary telephone receiver. Were our eyes but able to extend their scale, what strange music would we now see all round us, for æther waves can affect the eye directly; but the converse is not true, the ear is only open to material disturbances and we can never hope to hear pictures. It seems a paradox that we have not yet learnt to convey sight, which is already electric, by electrical means, while we have converted material sound into ætheric light and so conveyed it half-way round the globe. But the future surely holds this also in store. Perhaps we may yet be robbed of what some think to be one of the advantages of the new method of hearing opera!

H. R. RIVERS MOORE.

This article was placed in my hands as a result of a visit to the General Wireless office in Garrick Street, where I heard two acts of *Aida*.—[ED.]

A NOTE ON THE CLAVICHORD AND THE HARPSICHORD

THE keyboard instruments of the 17th and 18th centuries have not been laid up in lavender, and it is only on rare occasions one can realise that they were the brilliant means of expression of the music which was written for them. In fact, far from being laid up in lavender, they have, as often as not, been pushed carelessly into the outhouse or hayloft (that Ali Baba's cave of the antique hunter) and there they have died an unheeded death—the corpse being found eventually and sold with, "I can put it in perfect order for you, sir (or madam)—and, of course, the case is worth the money—it will be a charming ornament for your room." And in the room it is placed and pointed to as "That's my spinet, isn't it quaint?" Many, if not most, of these corpses are beyond repair—musically. Their general framework of wood is dry and brittle with age, and it is only in a few cases that the most careful of strengthening remedies make it possible to bring back again the complete musical vitality of the instrument. Our modern taste probably demands a more brilliant and certainly a higher pitch than that of earlier days, and these instruments have to go through a corresponding process of super-strengthening to that through which an old violin has gone to fit it for modern purposes.

Whether the early English virginals and harpsichords were first-class instruments and capable of responding to great technical skill on the part of the player can only be judged by the music which was written for them. But one cannot conceive that an instrument of crude mechanism could interpret the brilliant and intricate music to be found in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, and there is no reason to believe that such music was written as a mere mental exercise. I have never myself seen nor heard of anyone who possesses an instrument which was in existence when John Bull was composing, and on which one can now adequately perform his most brilliant music. Most of the instruments of such age are beyond repair. The motto on the lid of the harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers, of a considerably later date—1651—which once belonged to Handel, is probably only too true—

" Sic transit gloria mundi."

But coming a little nearer towards and during the 18th century,

keyboard instruments, both clavichords and harpsichords improved as regards their general workmanship and consequently as regards their durability, and in England, the Kirckmans and Burckat Tschudi constructed harpsichords which have stood well the test of time and can be put into a good state of musical repair, and possibly, I think, be made even more efficient than when they were first constructed.

On the other hand, the clavichord, an instrument of the very simplest mechanism, was invented almost perfect; and what improvement was made and what one can make in it to-day seems to be towards constructing a little more carefully its minor mechanical devices. When the first tangent of the first clavichord touched the string, the expressiveness that remains to-day was created, and what evolution there has been is only in the perfection of the balancing of the keyboard and the adjustment of other purely mechanical details which only affect the musical quality of the instrument is so far as they eliminate the difficulties of the player. But for all this, only on all too rare occasions do we see or hear a perfectly restored harpsichord or clavichord, and if one hears it said that "it is so quaint," or "a sweet tinkle," it is safe to assume that another one has been put in "perfect playing order" by the antique dealer. Intelligence and constant loving care have to be continually expended on bringing restoration up to a really high pitch, and it has been a few workermusicians like Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch who have not only most successfully repaired old specimens, but have made new ones.

THE CLAVICHORD.

Of all keyboard instruments, the clavichord possesses the most clear and delicate accent and a subtlety of expression, which is at the least astounding. The strings of thin wire are struck by upright tangents (somewhat like the ends of screwdrivers) which are slotted into the other end of the keys to that which is struck by the fingers. Nothing in the nature of an elaborate check-action lies between to deaden the nervous sensitiveness of the finger touch and its effect on the struck strings. The slightest variation of touch on the key by the finger is registered with the most delicate accuracy upon the string by the tangent. It is as if the most subtle and almost unobservable differences in the feeling of the innermost soul of the player were being transmitted to the hearer, and it is owing to the utter simplicity of the mechanism that this becomes a possibility. The thinness of the strings aids this sensitiveness. Although the fortissimo, compared with any other instrument, is pianissimo, the distance between the extremes of loud and soft is greater than elsewhere; there

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is added to the grades of softness and loudness, the arresting and alluring accent and soul searching or "speaking" quality which makes the clavichord seem to have a still greater gamut than it actually has.

The tangent, as it strikes the string and produces the sound, simultaneously frets the string to the required length to produce the particular note; and as the tangent is kept pressing against the string only by the pressure of the finger on the key, and as the string is thin and the pressure of the finger humanly variable, an almost inaudible wavering in the note, or, by an intentionally alternating softer and harder, pressure, a definite vibrato is obtained—one of the instrument's chief characteristics, a note almost like the human voice with its breathing and muscular tensions behind it. In fact, it is the muscular tension of the finger on the clavichord key that is transmitted and translated so delicately into music. Therefore, the clavichord mirrors the perfect control and ease and pleasure of the good player. That is its beauty and makes it possible to obtain the entrancing and ravishing effects that can scarcely be attained on any other keyboard instrument. It is so entirely apart and different from any other instrument, that no concerted music, as far as I am aware, has ever been written for it. In its way it is complete musically and its loudest tone is all too soft and ethereal to hold its own or to combine with any other quality of tone. Any other instrument completely drowns it, as does the human voice itself, and it requires one's almost breathless attention to its music. All this may seem to exalt the clavichord as an instrument above its deserved position, but one has only to hear, to realise that it is difficult not to use superlatives.

The clavichord was in earlier days most popular in Germany, and it is therefore natural that the finest music was written for it by John Sebastian Bach. There will always be some doubt as to which of his music was written expressly for it, some being equally suitable for the clavichord, harpsichord or organ. But there can be little doubt that the forty-eight preludes and fugues were intended for the clavichord, and the clavichordist can, I think, make a better decision than anyone else as regards what besides of Bach's music is for the instrument. For the interpretation of fugal themes the clavichord is at its best. Important music such as the "Chromatische Fantasie" can be fully expressed on the clavichord, as on the harpsichord. On the clavichord the magnificence of the crashing descending passages is not lost, they still remain in their proper relationship to the rest of the music, the whole being, however, in a much softer range of tone than on the harpsichord. Again, the marvellous accent of the clavichord has its full effect.

From all this it would appear that the clavichord is an instrument essentially for the gifted player with that indefinable attribute that we call genius, and it shares this peculiarity with the violin and other instruments. It is impossible for anyone but the finest player to satisfy in any way the listener, for the bad as well as the good is faithfully interpreted by its mechanism. It will probably, therefore, never be as popular as the piano, on which one can please the majority comparatively easily. The clavichord, even moderately well played, is unattractive, and badly played, is quite unbearable. It is the specialist's golf or cricket of music, not its rounders or ping-pong. The subtlety of its music is the subtlety of Shakespeare's word-music, and if one may draw the parallel, its greatest composer, Bach, may be considered the musical counterpart and contemporary in thought and feeling of Shakespeare.

THE HARPSICHORD.

The harpsichord is the culmination of its type, its predecessors and variants being the virginals, spinet, the ottavina and others with curious names. These are more or less only simple forms of the same instrument. It represents the end of the development of the plucked string keyboard instruments that grew from the lute, harp, guitar, mandoline and their variants, just as the modern organ represents the last development of keyboard wind instruments that originated in the pipes with reeds or otherwise. In fact, with its many varieties of tone, it is a concert of plectra instruments manipulated by means of a keyboard, just as the organ is a concert of wind instruments worked by the same device. And as the different stops on the harpsichord are named unison, octave, lute and harp, they bear much the same relation to one another as the diapason, principal, reed and other stops on the organ. One realises that the "dropping" from one stop to another or the "opening out" to the "combination" on both instruments is similar.

The harpsichord occupies its place in secular music as the organ does in the music of the Church. In their majestic beauty they are of the same weight and importance. It is as well to mention this as many who have not heard a fine harpsichord are apt to think of its tone as thin, while it is the very reverse—it is almost overwhelmingly full and mellow. Those who heard Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse's recent recital in a City church will endorse this statement. One must banish for a while, in thinking of its tone, any thought of the tone of the piano. It is as impossible to think of the tones of these two instruments together, as it is also impossible to have them in the same room and to go from one to the other. It is also impossible

for anyone, except a very practised performer who had trained himself to do so, to play first on one instrument and immediately, or even at any time, on the other. Pianists cannot play the harpsichord and get from it its peculiar qualities, and I have known harpsichordists who could not play with any success on the piano.

For some foolish reason the piano is sometimes described as the perfected keyboard instrument and lineal descendant of the harpsichord. The most one can really say is that the piano came into fashion and the harpsichord dropped out. Now that the harpsichord is being rediscovered, somewhat as Botticelli was rediscovered about fifty years ago, it may regain a popularity that it fully merits. Its salient qualities as a musical instrument are first of all its accent and attack, a clearly defined ringing tone, each note standing out in outline as it were from another in all its registers, its whole range of tone lively and virile—never tired. Possessing such qualities, it is incapable of expressing any musical *motif* that is in any way decadent or neurotic, for it is essentially the instrument of a period when the art of music is on the high crest of its development, and has all the grace and ease of beauty that comes of strength. Any trace of sentimentality is quite foreign to it. Speaking generally, one may say that the music written for this type of instrument is in feeling sometimes gay and happy, sometimes sad and tender, but one can never call it tired or sickly. It grew with the renaissance of the other arts in Europe and reached its prime in the period of ease and prosperity immediately following. What has come after has been more of the nature of a sickly and narcotic or banging noise of the "kill or cure" style, both in their way the deadly medicines of a decadent age. This, of course, is a general statement and must not be taken as ruling out natural exceptions.

What may be of interest to musicians to-day is a description of the construction of the harpsichord and the several peculiarities of its parts that give it its musical character. Roughly speaking, its sound box, its bridges, strings and plectra combine to give it distinctive tone; and deviation from, or alteration of, any of these parts, otherwise than dictated by tradition, have sometimes improved, but often spoiled, its qualities. Unlike the piano, its main structure is of wood, which gives it a mellow tone, and the introduction of even metal strips along the ridge of its bridges (as in Mr. Dolmetsch's modern examples), though giving an added brightness that tells in rapidly executed passages, takes away from the more mellow or diapason quality which is in itself beautiful; and it is a debatable point as to how far so fine a quality should be sacrificed. To produce the requisite volume of sound in the modern piano, even as much as to

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equal that of the harpsichord, the stringing has to be heavy and the main structure framed with steel to hold it. The stringing of the harpsichord being light, a wooden frame only is necessary. The instrument will stand in tune and the undoubtedly finer tone is achieved, similar to the tone of the smaller stringed instruments, such as the lute, the viol and the violin. And again, the pluck of the leather or quill plectra disturbs the string less than the strike of the piano hammer, reducing the amount of necessary resisting power to keep the strings in tune.

The harpsichord maker never attempted to make his instrument in miniature. If a more compact instrument were needed, the virginal was used, but the full double keyboard harpsichord has no variant such as the "drawing-room" and "baby," for if it were reduced in size, like the modern piano, its long and light strings would have to become short and heavy and the general scaling of the instrument would be altered until the sonorous and restful quality of its lower notes and the brilliant, birdlike quality of its higher ones would be lost.

What has been added from time to time (as well as the octave or set of strings tuned an octave higher than the rest) is a set called the 16 ft. strings; that is, not a set with its longest 16 ft., as against the main sets at 8 ft., but another set of 8 ft. tuned an octave lower and therefore necessarily thicker, though at the same tension. Bound strings have been used to obtain these lower notes with perfect results. This 16 ft. set has probably existed in all the finest harpsichords and Bach has most certainly taken them into consideration. They would have their full effect in his magnificent cadenzas. A double keyboard harpsichord with this register added represents the full development of the instrument; and the various qualities of tone and their combinations seem to the intelligent performer almost endless.

The plectra of the harpsichord are usually of leather or crow-quill. Sometimes thin springy metal has been used (notably by Pascal Taskin of Paris), but, on the whole, leather has now come to be considered the best of all materials, and it can be so softened or hardened, or so shaped and cut, that it produces many varieties of tone colour. The Kirkmans and Burckat Tschudi and Broadwood brought a set of quill plectra right up to the near bridge of one set of strings and by this means produced the lute effect, which is sharp and reedy owing to the non-resisting nature of the string immediately behind the bridge. But in most French and Italian models, and in Mr. Dolmetsch's modern examples, all the plectra of whatever material are side by side in the same position, a little distance from the front bridge, and different effects are obtained solely by the

varying softness or hardness or cutting of the leather or other materials. On the regulation and even adjustment of the plectra depends the touch of the instrument. This can be good or bad according to the care which is taken and the skill used in cutting the plectra to a nicety. Like all sensitive instruments, constant watching and care is necessary to keep the plectra, as well as the whole instrument, in good order. Couperin makes a point of this, that before everything a harpsichord should be *bien emplumé* and that it is useless to attempt to play upon it otherwise. It has been said that it is necessary to take a lute to bed with one and put it between the sheets to keep it warm and in tune. Though not requiring quite this amount of care, all harpsichords are sensitive to change in atmospheric conditions and cannot be left with impunity in badly ventilated or damp rooms. But all good things demand being taken care of and, after all, it is only reasonable treatment that is necessary, and we do not wish to convert such instruments into the equivalent of armoured cars. Music, one is thankful to say, has not yet awhile had to become shellproof.

Attempts have been made to create a piano and forte effect by means of the venetian swell, an apparatus like a venetian blind placed over the top of the whole box of the instrument and opened and closed by means of a lever attached to a pedal. This was used in the eighteenth century instruments, but it was of little use, and undoubtedly Mr. Dolmetsch's "half-lock" method of enabling the player to adjust by means of the pedals the various sets of plectra so that they either pluck lightly or strongly is a far better innovation. The fetish which demanded pianoforte effects that arose with the coming of that instrument caused the subtle and distinctive effects of the harpsichord to be lost sight of, and when the harpsichord would not do what the piano could do it dropped out of favour.

Music being an essentially emotional art, we are apt to think of fine instruments as heaven-sent creations, but they are nothing of the sort. No stroke of genius, no gift of God, has been added to them, except as a reward for the untiring ingenuity and scientific knowledge of the maker of them. When an instrument, as is said in the trade, "speaks," it means that it is so scientifically perfect that it is now fit to pass from the maker's hands into those of the performer and interpreter. But even then the performer, and also the composer, are subservient to the same fundamental laws that guided the maker. Those particular conditions which govern the making of the instrument must be understood by anyone who wishes to compose for or perform upon it. And the harpsichord having fallen somewhat out of use, these conditions are not easily to be understood when

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anyone seeks to return to it. Luckily, the world eventually proves too small for any of the arts to get lost in it. Someone somewhere picks them up again, as is the case to-day with this earlier art of music.

NORMAN WILKINSON.

SHAWMS AND WAITS

THERE has, for a long time, been a considerable difference of opinion as to what exactly is meant by the word "shawm." There is no question as to shawms having been pipes with a conical bore, and more or less of a bell, for their general appearance is well known from carvings and illuminations, but these, unfortunately, cannot show us the nature of the reed by which they were blown. Consequently, some people maintain that they were blown by a single reed, others that they had a double reed; whilst others again believe that the name was applied indifferently to pipes blown in both of these ways. Of late the general opinion seems to have been that they were usually, if not always, double reed instruments; but this view, there is reason to believe, is erroneous, as it is the object of this article to explain.

Unfortunately, no actual shawms have survived to show us the nature of the reed by means of which they were blown; and as there are no technical works upon musical instruments of earlier date than the sixteenth century, we have to fall back upon assumptions as to what was most probable, or to rely upon the linguistic evidence that can be obtained from the word shawm and other names applied to such instruments; and hitherto opinions have been guided almost entirely by the former of these two methods.

Canon Galpin begins chapter nine of his "Old English Instruments of Music" as follows:—"It has often been assumed that instruments played with the double reed . . . were introduced into Western Europe at the time of the Crusades," and then goes on to argue that they were known much earlier. But he cannot produce any evidence as to the reeds themselves and can only point to conical pipes in carvings and manuscripts which, because they are conical, he thinks must have been played with a double reed. This, of course, is assumption, not evidence; and it is open to us to paraphrase his sentence and say with equal justice that it has been assumed by Canon Galpin and other writers that instruments played with the double reed were known in Western Europe before the time of the Crusades, but that they can produce no actual evidence in support of their assumption, or, at any rate, have not done so. Canon Galpin cites the use of the word "reodpipere," in Aelfric's Saxon vocabulary of the tenth century, as a proof of the existence of the double reed; but the word would be equally applicable to a pipe constructed of reed even if not

sounded by a tongue of reed at all, or to the single reed, which we know had always been in use among the Romans, and was, moreover, the type of reed used by the Celtic races on their "pibcorn" or "hornpipe."

We may at once concede that the use of the double reed in Europe was in no way connected with the Crusades; and that for the two following reasons:—In the first place the reed instruments of Syria and the Levant with which the Crusaders came into contact were not played with the double reed at all, but were the "zummarah" and the "arghool," both of which are double pipes, each of which has its single beating reed; therefore, the Crusaders cannot have brought the double reed back with them to the West from Syria. In the second place the double reed had been established in Europe, though only in one isolated spot, centuries before the Crusades; and that spot was Spain, where it had been introduced by the Moors in the eighth or ninth century.

The celebrated Arab writer, Al Farabi, who was educated at Cordova, writing in the first half of the tenth century, says that the Arabs in Spain played upon the oboe with seven fingerholes and a thumbhole at the back, which they called "saika" or "azahika."

Whether the word "saika" has any affinity or not with "gaita," the instrument is identical with the gaitas of modern Spain and Africa; while the name "saika" is still used in Africa. (See F. S. Daniel, "The Music of the Arab.")

In confirmation of this we find the "raita" defined in Dozy's Arabic dictionary as "Espèce de hautbois au Maghrib; 'gaita' en Espagnol." And again Simonnet's Mozarabic dictionary gives "gáitha" as being "clarinete Marroqui, espèce de hautbois."

This does not mean that the double reed was known in any other part of Western Europe until much later; but it does show that it entered Europe from Africa, and it gives us a clue by means of which we are enabled to fix the approximate date at which the double reed crossed the Pyrenees and became known in other parts of Europe.

Everyone is agreed as to the derivation of the word shawm and its Continental equivalents, "chalumeau" and "schalmei." They come, through the old French form, "chalemie," from the Latin and Greek word "calamus," which primarily meant a reed, and was subsequently used to denote the pipes made of reed and sounded by means of a single beating tongue or reed.

This being so, the natural presumption is that any instrument called by one of these cognate names was played by a single reed, in the absence of any definite evidence to the contrary. But people (Galpin, for example) have been so obsessed by the false idea

that the "tibiae" of the Romans and the "auloi" of the Greeks were blown by a double reed, that they have gratuitously attributed a double reed to the shawm, in spite of the fact that, while we know that the Greeks and Romans had single reeds, we have no evidence that they made use of double reeds.

The long straws that have been found inside certain ancient Egyptian flutes have been quoted as evidence of the use of a double reed; but no one has shown how they could be so used. They are as long as the tube itself, and extend all down the inside, passing the fingerholes. A possible clue as to their purpose is afforded by an instrument made by the Kachens of Upper Burma, of which there is a specimen in the Horniman Museum. In this also there is the long straw inside the tube; but, whatever its purpose, it is clearly unconnected with the actual sound production, for the sound is produced by a metal "free reed" at the upper end. The effect of the straw is apparently to give a tremulous effect, as is done by the tremulant of an organ; and is analogous to the hole covered with membrane that exists in some Chinese flutes. *Prima facie*, therefore, the name shawm is more likely to have been applied to an instrument sounded by means of a single reed than to one having a double reed.

The other word which was applied to a reed pipe in England in the Middle Ages was "wayghte," or, as we now spell it, "wait," and, from lack of proper information, it has often been tacitly assumed that the names shawm and wait were interchangeable terms for one and the same instrument. This was certainly not the case, for they are constantly used in contradistinction to each other. How they differed, and what they both really were, can be seen by investigating the origin and derivation of the word "wait."

All parties are agreed that this word is the fourteenth century English form of a French word "guaite," which is first met with in the thirteenth century, and denoted a wind instrument; for even in France the form "wayte" is met with (Franch: de Blamont, 1308, Arch: Montbéliard); but as regards the origin of the French word "guaite," we venture to differ from the opinion that has hitherto always been accepted.

People who did not know the ethnological history of the instrument hunted about for a possible derivation of the name; and, as they did not look in the right direction they could hit upon nothing better than to suggest that "guaite" was connected with the French verb "guetter," to watch; and on this assumption they proceeded to build up a flimsy theory that watchmen played upon a pipe blown by a reed, and that a name for a watchman was transferred from him himself to the instrument which he blew.

This in itself is hardly satisfying; for why should an instrument be given the name of the man who used it, even if it were associated only with him? Why, again, should it be given the name of one class of man out of many who played upon it? It is suspicious, to say the least of it. But what is to be said for this theory when we take into consideration the fact that, so far from the reed pipe, either single or double, being in any way associated with watchmen, we have quite definite knowledge that they, in all ages and countries, have always made use of horns with cupped mouthpieces, and not reed instruments at all! We must entirely mistrust the derivation usually accepted, and look further afield for something more probable and logical.

It so happens that another derivation can be found which is not only less fanciful and far-fetched, but also explains the exact nature of the instrument in question, and incidentally enables us to fix fairly closely the date of its introduction into both France and England. The true derivation we believe to be as follows:—

All over Northern Africa the name for the pipe blown by a double reed is a word which is generally spelt "gaita" or "al-gaita," though variants such as "raita" are met with owing to the difficulty of transliterating the initial letter, which is the guttural Arabic "ghain," for which there is no equivalent in European languages, although the Spanish "g" somewhat approaches it.

The forms as given by travellers and scholars are as follows:—In Morocco, "al-gaita." Among the Shawia and other Berber tribes, "raita," as also throughout Algeria generally. Curt Sachs gives the name in use among the Kabyle as "ghaida," while Mahillon gives the Tuareg word as "al-gaita." A. J. M. Tremearne, in his "Hausa Superstitions," describes the Hausa form of the oboe, and says that it is known as "algaita." Among the Fulbe, to the South of Lake Chad, Sachs says that the oboe is called "algaita-su"; while that of the Fulani Lere, in the Cameroons, is known as "alligaita." (Pitt-Rivers Collection.) In Egypt, while the pure Arabic name "Zamr" is more usual, Sachs says that the name "ghete," which is a form of the Moroccan name, is also used.

The instrument was taken into Spain after the Arab conquests of the eighth century, as has already been shown; and to this day the word "gaita" is in common use in Spain for a rude oboe, as well as for the bagpipe. It is, nowadays, more frequently applied to the latter than the former; but it originally meant the pipe without the bag. Diez, in his great "Comparative Dictionary of the Romance Languages," gives "a little flute or pipe" as the primary meaning of the word, and "bagpipe" as the secondary meaning. Barcia's

Dictionary says that the word has various meanings, one of which is "chirimia, or oboe," and gives as its etymology the Arabic "gaita." Again, the dictionaries of Ponce de Leon, Velasquez de la Cadena, and Lopez and Bensley, all say that the word "gaita" means in Spanish a "hornpipe" as well as a bagpipe. Furthermore, in Portuguese, the word means simply an oboe; and to express a bagpipe it is necessary to say "gaita de folles."

The reason for the name coming to be applied to a different form of instrument is made simple by the fact that the bagpipe is everywhere a derivative of the plain pipe blown by a reed; and this accounts for the name having been transferred to the bagpipe in some parts of Spain, while it was retained for the oboe in others. In fact, we see the identical thing taking place in France, where the names "chalemie" and "cornemuse" (which had always denoted the reed pipe) were transferred to the bagpipe in the seventeenth century. Virdung, in 1518, described the "cornamusa" as a bagless pipe, blown by a reed, stopped at the lower end; while "chalemie" is given as "flute champêtre" in La Monnoie's glossary, and as "hirtenschalmey" (shepherd's oboe) in Sachs and Villate's Dictionary. But by the year 1686, when Mersenne published his "Harmonie Universelle," both these words had come to mean a bagpipe. The same had, moreover, occurred with the name "gaita," taken from the Spanish, as Borel, in his "Dictionnaire des termes du vieux Français," says, "Gayetier—joueur de cornemuse, de l'Espagnol gayetro, de gayta, cornemuse."

After, apparently, a considerable lapse of time, this double reed instrument and its name, both being derived through Moorish channels, crossed the Pyrenees; and consequently we meet them in the South of France in the thirteenth century, but with the name modified into "guaite," or sometimes "wayte." As Southern France in the thirteenth century was an appanage of the English crown, it was only natural for the guaite to be brought over to England and be Anglicised into "wait."

At that period then, and for a long time afterwards, the wait was the pipe blown with a double reed, which came from Africa through Spain and France; and the shawm was, as it had previously been, the native pipe blown by a single beating reed. But this is not all. There have come down to us various mediæval lists of musicians and their instruments, and in them "shawms and waits" are repeatedly enumerated side by side. For this there could be no possible reason if the two words denoted the same thing; hence it is clear that there must have been some distinct and well recognised distinction between the two instruments; and, as we know that they both were reed pipes, the most obvious explanation is that one of

them was played with a single reed and the other by a double reed. Now we know that the "gaita" or wait was, as it still is in Africa and Spain, a double reed instrument; hence there can be no doubt that the shawm was still, as it had long been, a single reed instrument. We have a further confirmation of this fact in what occurred when the word "hoboy" first came to be used in England to denote the pipe with the double reed, as it did about the year 1500; for we then find shawms and hoboys mentioned side by side as instruments in a band, but never waits and hoboys, which would have meant one and the same type of instrument.

The inference is clear that the word shawm never was used to denote anything but a pipe blown by a single reed, and the word wait was never applied to anything but a pipe with a double reed.

This clear distinction lasted up to the middle of the seventeenth century, but at that date a confusion between the two terms did arise, which was the cause of the general belief that the confusion existed at a much earlier period, if not always, although such was not the case.

The explanation of this seventeenth century confusion of the terms is simple. By that date, in musical circles the word hoboy had completely taken the place of the older word "wait," for denoting the instrument with the double reed, although the old word survived among the common people; and at the same time players on the single reed shawm were becoming converts to the double reed, and took to putting a double reed into a pipe that had been originally made for a single reed, that is to say, into a shawm. For example, the "pibcorn," or Celtic shawm, was originally blown by a single reed, but latterly was played with a double one. (See H. Balfour on "The Old British Pibcorn," in the "Journal of the Anthropological Institute," Vol. XX.). Again in Randle Holme's "Academie of Armoury," part 2, f. 273 (Harl. MS. 2027), written before 1688, instead of the phrase "hoboys and shawms," which repeatedly occurs at earlier dates, we read of "Howboye or shawm," which are drawn of two shapes, but both at that date having a double reed. The result of this was that the word shawm ceased at this date to preserve its original technical and restricted meaning, and came to be applied to the ruder kinds of reed instruments, no matter whether they were furnished with a single reed or a double reed; and the old hard and fast distinction between the shawm and the wait entirely disappeared.

In the eighteenth century the words hoboy and shawm once more assumed a distinct differentiation of meaning, though not the same one that had formerly existed; and it came about in this way. The invention of the octave key added an extra octave to the compass of the hoboy and that name came to be restricted in its

application to the double reed pipe which had the octave key and the extended compass. The old-fashioned instrument with no octave key did not, however, disappear for the best part of a century, and, as shawms had already come to be played with a double reed, it was convenient to use the word shawm to denote the primitive hoboy with no octave key.

In these two facts, the application of double reeds to shawms in the seventeenth century, and the invention of the octave key in the eighteenth century, we have the causes of the misconception that have been prevalent as to the nature of shawms and waits at all periods; and in the true story of the "gaita" we have the elucidation of the nature of both instruments, which were quite distinct in this country from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

It must, however, be pointed out that although the German word "schalmei" has the same origin as the English word shawm, it never had the same clear restricted signification; we know, for instance, from Virdung, that at the beginning of the sixteenth century it meant a double reed pipe. The reason for this difference between shawm and schalmei is quite clear in the light of the information derived from the word gaita.

When the English adopted the double reed they also adopted its name, and so had separate words for the double and single reed instruments; but the Germans adopted the instrument without its special name, and consequently had to use the word schalmei from the start to signify indiscriminately both their old single reed shawm and the newly imported double reed.

A. H. FRERE.

This article was shown to Canon Galpin, who made the following comments:—

The writer has dealt with a very attractive subject—the origin of names and their application: but, unfortunately, in building up his theories, he has, in this instance, based them on false premises. It is now well ascertained and agreed that the double reed was in general use in the Roman "tibiae"—mosaics, vases and sepulchral slabs show the form of reed so distinctly that there can be no further doubt of the fact. I am sorry that I am charged with being "obsessed" by such up-to-date research.

As this is the case, my friend Mr. Frere cannot restrict the time when the knowledge of the double reed permeated Western Europe to the 8th or 9th centuries, nor the source to an isolated spot (Spain). For long centuries before this Roman influence and customs had predominated the whole area.

The writer then proceeds to derive the word "wait" from "gaita," in order to emphasise his previous statement as to the single reed shawm. But "gaita" with its derivatives is not always used for a double reed instrument—the Bulgarian "gaida" has a single reed, and all the specimens of the Moroccan "ghete" I have handled had the same. I do not know whence my old correspondent Curt Sachs got his information.

Then we are told that the wait (instrument) can have nothing to do with waites (watchmen), "as they, in all ages and countries, have always made use of horns." Well, all I can say is that Edward the Fourth's waits piped. As

the old record quaintly puts it, "he pipethe watch nightely foure tymes, and maketh bon gayte at everie chaumbre, doore and offyce as well, for feare of pyckeres and pillers"—gentlemen of questionable character. Even now, in many foreign towns, small pipes are used in the streets.

The facts appear to be these:—The watchmen's instrument was a small pipe, called in England (according to a 15th cent. Nominale) a "waite pipe" (calamaula, chalemelle), whereas the larger and deeper toned instruments were generally called by our forefathers "shawms," as shown by the old Lekingfeld proverb (temp. Henry VII.). Edward the Fourth's minstrels, we are told, used "shalms and smalle pypes," or, as it was often expressed, "shawms and waites." When the hoboy made its presence felt it superseded the waite pipe or high treble instrument, just as the violin at the same period ousted the treble viol, and so we read of "shawms and hoboyes," not "waites and hoboyes"; for it was a question of pitch and not of the kind of reed used.

There is really no evidence to show that shawms in the 18th century changed their character, as suggested by the writer: in 1618 Praetorius assures us that the shawms were played with a double reed like the English "Hoboyen."

I have already greatly trespassed on your space and your readers' patience: I have much more to say, but I will conclude with an expression of thanks to the writer of the article for supplying us with further instances of the insertion of a small straw or thin reed into the bore of the instrument. In an old Irish bagpipe I once had, I found within the chanter (played with a double reed) a long piece of rush pith, and I was told by an Irish friend that it was the custom of the old pipers to do this in order to moderate the tone and volume of sound—certainly it had a good effect.

FRANCIS W. GALPIN.

VERDI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

IN an age in which not only great soldiers and politicians, but captains of industry, financiers, actors and singers write, or cause to be written, the story of their achievements, it is, at least, singular that there should be no authoritative and completely trustworthy biography of so successful a composer as Verdi. Boswells are rare at any time, but Verdi does not lack worshippers who could follow in the path of M. Vincent d'Indy. It looks as if the excessive modesty so typical of the composer had cast its spell upon his followers and admirers. There exist one or two admirable studies of Verdi's work—pre-eminent amongst them the articles of Sir Charles Stanford. But these deal with a special subject. The books of general information add to our knowledge of facts, but often contain statements we instinctively distrust and give rise, in consequence, to serious doubts as to the trustworthiness of the author's judgment. When, for instance, we are told that the approval which has been given to Iago's monologue in *Othello* is due to the fact that "many and many" are in complete sympathy with the sentiments the poet has put in the actor's mouth, we may well be pardoned for objecting that, according to the best authorities, the besetting sin of mankind is not the wickedness of Iago, but sheer stupidity.

It is undoubtedly owing to the scarcity of trustworthy information that certain legends have taken root which have not the slightest foundation in fact. In countries where the *Requiem* is seldom performed, there is a general notion that the composer of this most sincere and lucid confession of faith was an atheist. That Verdi did not share his wife's faith in the infallibility of Church dogmas we have no reason to doubt. But it must be remembered that the Church in Italy played a political part during the years of the revolution, and their party was not that of the patriots and of Verdi. No Italian has said more bitter things of Churchmen than Dante, yet he was the most profound Christian of his time. For anyone who can understand the message of the *Requiem*, of the *Laudi*, of the *Te Deum*, the evidence of sincere religious belief these contain is conclusive and irrefutable.

Another mischievous legend circulated first by those who thought Verdi's devotion to music a serious loss to agriculture, suggests that the later and best works owe much to the influence of Wagner. Now,

the only evidence that counts in this respect—internal evidence—is equally decisive on this point. Neither in *Othello* nor in *Falstaff* is there a single instance of Wagnerian influence. The orchestra plays a more important part in the later than in the early Verdian operas. But it does not co-operate with the actors, as happens in the Wagnerian dramas. It emphasises a dramatic situation, it adds colour and vigour to the musical phrase; it does not enter as a new element in the action. Wagner, heir of the great German tradition, is a contrapuntist first and foremost; Verdi, the melodist, never uses or meant to use counterpoint with the same freedom and for the same purpose. He accompanies the voice, which is his chief concern. The development and increase of power and variety of the Verdian orchestra is not a sudden phenomenon due to foreign influence, but a gradual process of improvement due to the exercise of uncommon powers of observation and self-criticism which goes on without interruption from *Na Bucco* and *I Lombardi* to *Othello* and *Falstaff*. Wagner came too late on the Italian scene to enslave the composer of *Aida*. Verdi, besides, was a firm believer in a moderate form of nationalism. He admired Wagner, yet considered that it would be a fatal thing for Italians to set about imitating foreign examples. He sympathised whole-heartedly with certain Wagnerian reforms, and strongly advocated the hiding of the orchestra from the spectators, but he never accepted the Wagnerian theory of the leading themes. He was a convinced believer in the study of fugue, because only this art, he thought, can teach freedom and ease of modulation; but this material is mainly harmony and melody. The melodies of *Falstaff* are infinitely subtler, more pointed and more beautiful than the melodies of *Rigoletto*, yet equally unsuited to contrapuntal treatment. In writing to his late adversary, Bulow, in 1892, he says:—"It is right that the art of the South should be different from the art of the North. . . . You, lucky people, are still the children of Bach. We had once a great school of our own; the school of Palestrina. Now we are losing our national characteristics and are threatened with ruin." And elsewhere: "What is natural in these (the Germans) becomes artifice in us." In refusing the directorship of the Naples Conservatoire, he regrets his inability to accept a position which would have enabled him to stand "with one foot in the past and the other in the future," and to advise students to study constantly the art of the fugue, Palestrina, and a few of his contemporaries, then Marcello's recitative, and avoid the chord of the diminished seventh, "rock and refuge of us all." They will thus be prevented from swelling the ranks of the imitators "who seek and find not."

The only influence Verdi did not escape was that of Rossini.

The *Barber of Seville* was written when Verdi was three years old, and it is easy to imagine how the genius, good fortune and importance of the Pesarese would be magnified and extolled to the young musician in the little village of Busseto. He grew up and found Rossini the musical dictator of Italy, the honoured guest of the French capital. Surely ambition could not dream of a higher reward than to follow in his footsteps! Rossini's crescendos still delighted the *dilettanti*; Rossini's jests were repeated and treasured like the sayings of a sage. Fortunately temperamental differences prevented anything like a slavish adoption of Rossini's methods and manner.

Rossini once spoke of Verdi as a "serious young man." That is what Rossini himself never was. Gifted or cursed with an ease of writing that had few parallels, he cultivated the art of working rapidly until serious thought and consideration were out of question. He trusted so much in the "divine" gifts that he forgot how Providence sometimes refuses to help those who do not help themselves. The affectation of turning out an aria or an overture while waiting for a belated meal cannot but have undermined his powers of self-criticism. Writing pathetic melodies with the tongue in the cheek is not an art likely to endure. The man of the world might achieve success and win those marks of distinction he must share with those whose names appear only in the society columns of newspapers, but the dreamer will carry the day at the last. It is significant that while Rossini ended his life in the brilliant world of Paris, surrounded by wits and flatterers, Verdi's closing years were passed in almost claustral seclusion at St. Agata. In the end, the lonely seer of visions won—*Vitisti Galilee*. The art of Rossini is of the past. Verdi's is of the present and the future. Not one of the masterpieces which followed the *Barber of Seville* survives. *William Tell*, the merits of which are undeniable, has almost completely disappeared from the theatre. The *Barber of Seville* will last as long as any other masterpiece of comedy. Its music commands approval both in the great theatre and in the humble beer garden—but it cannot inspire the young nor sway a nation. The early operas of Verdi have nothing so polished or witty as this *Barber*, yet they gave Italy what Italy never had before—national song.

The value of art is not, of course, measured by its political importance. The composer of "*La Marseillaise*" is not a greater musician than Wagner because his song has won wider popularity than the "*Kaisermarsch*." But in the world of music there is a place for the national singer as well as for the towering genius, for the prophets and the reformers. The early operas of Verdi should not be considered so much as products of immature genius as in the light of their time and as evidence of new individuality. Their technique may often be

lamentable; their melodies, however, possess a lilt, a vigour that is not to be found elsewhere in Italian music of the century. That is the chief characteristic of Verdi and it fitted in admirably with the awakening of new political energies. Centuries of oppression have engendered scepticism in literature and sapped the sources of artistic impulse. Neither Rossini, the cunning, the sceptic, nor pale, anemic, charming Bellini had the faith that wins in the face of great obstacles. Verdi possessed that faith. His whole life is an inspiring example of courage and determination. The most marvellous thing about him is not that the works of his early and middle periods are unequal and imperfect, but that he won through them to maturity and perfection. He had not even the consciousness of his own excellence to support him, which Wagner must have had as soon as his plans for the *Rheingold* matured, for the composer of *Rigoletto* could not but be aware of the weaknesses of *Attila*, and by the time he had written *Othello* he must have known how much greater this was than any he had done before. His faith in the future (even the "art of the future" had no terrors for him he declared in later years), in the possibility of winning through to real artistic excellence, was matched by the national realisation that no foreign conqueror can resist finally the impulse of a united people. Thus it came that he gave Italy her national songs, songs whose fiery energy harmonised with and expressed the temper of the nation; songs which could not grow while the soil was torn by faction and poisoned by scepticism. It will be said, perhaps, that the poet, by creating favourable situations and writing suggestive lines, deserves equal credit for this fanning of the patriotic spirit. That is not so. One of the Verdian choruses which roused the Italians like a tocsin call to arms begins, "Si ridesti il leon di Castiglia" (may the lion of Castille awaken again). There is no apparent reason why the lion of Castille should stir an audience any more than the lions of Trafalgar Square. It is to the music and to the music only, to its vigorous swing and impulse, that we must look for the part played by opera in the political history of Italy in the last century. The libretti of Verdi's early operas were usually maimed by unintelligent Austrian censors. But the censor was as powerless to restrain the electrifying rhythm of music as to set limits to hopes and longings, to the thoughts and convictions.

Verdi gave Rossini the tribute of admiration and affection which the young are wont to pay to their heroes. But they differed so much in outlook and temperament, in their conception of the world, in their physical aptitudes, that though the example of the elder may have been a spur and a moral support, it can hardly have been a practical guide to the younger man. Verdi learnt less from traditions and from

his immediate predecessors than any other musician. The man whose relations with Verdi have not received the study and attention they deserve was the librettist of *Othello* and *Falstaff*, Arrigo Boito. I know of no reliable record of the spiritual intercourse and intimacy between the two. What to us appears obvious is that the greater range of the two last operas finds its origin in the inspiration of close contact with an artist of Boito's mental calibre and humanity as well as in the process of gradual improvement characteristic of Verdi. The accident of being born and bred in a village does not disqualify a man for fame and honours, but it must retard somewhat his progress in the big world. The provincial atmosphere of his native Busseto, habits of seclusion and retirement could not but narrow Verdi's outlook. His attitude towards Wagner and the Germans, towards the younger generation and the musicians "of the future," reveals the effort of a generous and sincere mind to understand phenomena a man of the world would have read less wisely, perhaps, but with greater ease. The artistic centre nearest to Busseto—Parma—would then only strengthen conservative instincts and not encourage enterprise or point the way to innovation. The political situation in Italy at the time was another handicap. A state of virtual or open war, with the anxieties, the extreme hopes and sorrows it engenders, is not favourable to high artistic endeavour. And all the operas written before *Aida* were composed under the shadow of war and revolution, a fact which explains, if it does not justify, the quality of their libretti.

Boito, on the other hand, a musician of unusual distinction, who had had early the proud ambition to set to music Goethe's *Faust*, not dazzled by its lyric aspects, like Gounod, nor by its picturesque romanticism, like Berlioz, but with clear perception of its philosophic and poetic significance, was also steeped in English and German as well as Latin culture. If he left not a deeper mark in Italian literary history, the probable reason lies in the fact that unusual knowledge and experience have at times a paralysing effect. As everybody knows, angels fear to tread where the less wise butt in thoughtlessly and irresponsibly. Hamlet lectures on philosophy when every instinct and the powers of heaven and hell urge him to action. Boito, with the widening of mind and interest, appears to have lost the decision and initiative for a big effort, to have stood uncertain whether to serve music or poetry, and decide in favour of music only to end in writing the poetry of *Nero*. The simpler psychology of Verdi did not know these conflicts. He had periods of doubt and inaction, when his mind drew back the better to prepare for the next stride. When that preparation was finished, the irresistible call was obeyed without demur or question. Thus the one completed the other, and the

partnership resulted in the finest work of both Verdi and Boito. But what the two discussed; what ideas they exchanged, and jests; what secret they shared, what criticism; how that spiritual union was brought about and strengthened—this the ideal biographer of Verdi, who is yet to come, will have to discover.

F. BONAVIA.

VERDI'S LETTERS TO LÉON ESCUDIER

(Continued from page 70, January issue.)

No. 10.

St. Agata, Busseto,

Feb. 8, 1865.

Dear Léon,

To-day I have sent off to Ricordi the last act of *Macbeth* finished and complete. I have written afresh all the opening Chorus of the First Act, and touched up and scored the Aria of the tenor. Then, after the baritone's Romance to the end all is new, and there is the description of the battle and the final hymn.

When you hear it you will observe that I have written a fugue for the battle!!! A fugue! I, who detest everything that smacks of the schools and who have not done such a thing for nearly thirty years! But I'll tell you that in this instance that musical form is to the point. The repetition of subject and counter-subject, the jar of dissonances, the clashing sounds express a battle well enough. Only I should like the Attack to be played by the valve trumpets, as we have them, because they are so loud-sounding and sonorous; your key-trumpets are weak and feeble in this place. At any rate, the orchestra will be able to enjoy itself. At a more convenient time I will send you all my remarks on this Fourth Act.

G. VERDI.

No. 11.

Busseto,

April 28, 1865.

Dear Léon,

In some French papers I have noticed sentences which would admit of doubt [as to how *Macbeth* went].* Some draw attention to one thing and some to another. One finds the subject is sublime and another that it is not suited for music, while another says that I did not know Shacpeare (*sic*) when I wrote *Macbeth*. But in this they are quite wrong. I may not have rendered *Macbeth* well, but that I do not know, do not understand and feel Shaspeare (*sic*), no, by heavens, no! He is one of my very special poets, and I have had him in my hands from my earliest youth, and I read and re-read him continually.

Goodbye.

G. VERDI.

* *Macbeth*, translated by Nuittier and Beaumont, was given for the first time on the stage of the Théâtre Lyrique, April 21, 1865, and was played only fourteen times. This work, which Verdi had radically remodelled, as his correspondence shows, had been first produced in Italy at the Pergola at Florence on March 14, 1847. The original libretto is by Piave.

No. 12.

Busseto,

May 4, 1865.

Dear Léon,

You tell me nothing of the later performance of *Macbeth*. Have they killed you with all their hisses? *L'Africaine** is produced, and you don't write me one word. Aren't you sending me news of so great an event, which must have stirred all Paris and shaken the musical world? I don't know how to account for your silence.

Yours affectionately,

G. VERDI.

No. 13.

Busseto,

May 28, 1865.

Dear Léon,

M. Carvalho's device of having the drinking song sung by the tenor [Macduff] is certainly ingenious, but I am still of opinion that this spoils the complete effect of the finale. To me it seems much finer and more dramatic that Lady Macbeth, on Macbeth's invitation to "sound again the joyous Brindisi," should take it up again and finish it. Then, too, if Macduff utters words of suspicion, they will be in contradiction with the brilliant music of the song. And meanwhile, what will Lady Macbeth be doing? A secondary part? That is impossible. In this scene Lady Macbeth is and must be the chief personage both dramatically and musically. Add that in this way the concerted finale which closes the Act would suffer. Only at this point and not earlier must Macduff suspect, and decide to leave the country. Have no fears about the *variety* in the scene, and keep the calm effect for the Finale. A little respite after the previous turmoil will not come amiss. Let it be well staged, well conducted and kept together, and with all the colouring I have pointed out, and you will see that the Act will finish well. I understand perfectly that what all this comes to is that Monjaube must be spoken to; but these are personal considerations that have nothing to do with the drama.

Your affectionate,

G. VERDI.

No. 14.

Busseto,

June 3, 1865.

Dear Léon,

When everything has been properly reckoned, weighed and summed up, *Macbeth* is a failure. Amen. I confess, however, that I did not expect it. I did not think I had done too badly, but it seems I was wrong. Allow me to make a few observations all the same. The Duet in the First Act, the Finale in the Second, and the sleepwalking scene did not have the effect they ought to have had. Well, there must have been something in the performance that was not quite right.

**L'Africaine* had been produced on April 28, 1865.

I am not speaking of the rest of the opera, but often through trying to do too much, nothing is done. The failure of the opera will, I fear, cause much talk at the Théâtre Lyrique. Operas are only a pretext for the stage machinery.

Ricordi has not written to me anything about the scheme for producing *Macbeth* at the Scala. That would be another mistake. At the Scala they no longer know how to interpret opera. It would be another failure. All this has nothing to do with what you write to me about the opera.

I am told that Bottesini is intriguing to be made conductor at the Théâtre des Italiens. Then Bosoni is going? If this is so, why do you not try to get back Mariani? I could manage the business if Bagier wants him. But take care that no one interferes. If Bagier wants him, make reasonable terms, and I will undertake to make him accept them. Then at last you will have a good conductor.

Goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 15.

Busseto,

June 19, 1865.

Dear Léon,

Are you joking? Write to the Opéra? Do you not think I might meet with an unpleasant reception after what happened two years ago at the rehearsals of the *Vespi*? Write to the Opéra now in the face of those silly precedents set by Mme. Meyerbeer, who lavishes tiepins, snuff boxes, bracelets, jewellery, conductor's bâtons, etc., etc.! What a business! Even art becomes a matter of banking, and to succeed one needs to be a millionaire. But putting aside these petty intrigues, and joking apart, I should be bold enough to encounter all the wrath and curses if I had on my side as a conductor a man of intelligence and decision like M. Perrin. Nothing would be easier than to come to an agreement for the writing of an opera; we should agree in half a minute if there were a libretto or at least a ready-made subject. *King Lear* is magnificent, sublime, pathetic, but not sufficiently spectacular for an opera. In this respect *Cleopatra* is better, but the protagonists' love and characters and her very misfortunes arouse little sympathy. At any rate, to judge of it one would have to see it. In fine, everything depends on a libretto. A libretto, a libretto, and the opera is written!

I cannot give you an answer yet about Mariani, but will do so shortly. Meanwhile, arrange matters with Bagier, so that at last you will have a conductor for the orchestra at the Théâtre des Italiens.

Goodbye, goodbye.

G. VERDI.*

* At the end of November of this year, 1865, Verdi went to Paris, returning to Italy in the following March.

No. 16.

Turin,

Aug. 8, 1865.

My Dear Léon,

I am here at Turin and have received the cheque which you sent me for fr. 9,810, due to me on account of my author's rights up to the end of June last.

Now about the operas. Bagier has written, and I am a little embarrassed how to answer him, because his business can and ought to be done only after Perrin's. Suppose, for instance, no definite arrangement is come to with Perrin; do you want me to come to Paris to produce only *Simon Boccanegra*? That is impossible. This affair must be worked in connection with the two others at the Opéra. Besides, that's what you think, *n'est-ce pas*? Perhaps it will be necessary to wait a little longer before speaking to Bagier.

Goodbye, goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 17.

Busseto,

Sept. 8, 1865.

Dear Léon,

There is no coming to an understanding with the Théâtre des Italiens. Bagier writes to me that he no longer wishes to give *Boccanegra*, and quotes a letter of mine of last year which has nothing whatever to do with 1865. He pretends that I authorised him to produce *La Forza del Destino*, and it is not so. I send you a copy of his letter so that you can see how the matter stands—to the devil with it and all theatres!

You see he is in a rage because he did not know that *La Forza* was being done at the Opéra. Why didn't you tell him? I am replying to him that he can produce *Boccanegra* or not; it doesn't matter a fig to me. Here's a confused business, and it confuses all the other affairs because now I am annoyed at making a trip to Paris merely for *La Forza del Destino* at the Opéra.

Yours, in haste,

G. VERDI.

No. 18.

Copy, in Mme. Verdi's Handwriting.

Paris, Aug. 29, 1865.

Having received no answer to my letter of the 2nd inst., I conclude that the proposal it contained does not suit you. I am not surprised; for in looking through your letters for an explanation of it I have found, in one of Aug. 10, 1864, the following:—

"I am glad you have dropped the idea of giving *Aroldo*, and I should be glad if you would also drop *Simon Boccanegra* and *Miller*. *Miller* is an opera too often given at Paris, and *Boccanegra* is too gloomy a

libretto, and success would be doubtful. As to *La Forza del Destino*, I should like to think over it a little before deciding. Better, however, than any of these projects would be a new opera—only I couldn't and wouldn't do it without a subject that was thoroughly and completely and in all respects suitable.

"If you insist on giving *La Forza del Destino*, do give it far on in, or at the end of, the season; and the same with the other operas.

"Do what you think best: I have merely given my view."

After that I ought not to have spoken again to you about *Simon Boccanegra*, for I entirely agree with you. Please forgive me: it was only my wish to have you at Paris that prompted my letter. I abandon all idea of giving *Boccanegra* this season, so we won't talk of it again.

What I really want is to give *La Forza del Destino*, since I had the scenery and dresses for it made last year, after receiving that letter of yours I have just quoted, which is my authorisation.

While you are waiting for a satisfactory subject for a new opera for the Théâtre Italien, which I am most anxious to have, won't you come to Paris and conduct the rehearsals of *La Forza del Destino*, which I am longing to mount? I hope you will. Please answer quickly.

Yours, etc.,

BAGIER.

No. 19.

Busseto,

Sept. 12, 1865.

Dear Léon,

If, after turning matters over, Bagier is disposed to re-enter into an agreement about *Boccanegra*, let it be so; as you know, I have nothing against him, and I do not want to refuse the proposed arrangement for the sake of a trifling misunderstanding. I accept it therefore, but I don't want to run the risk of writing to him directly, because if he happened to change his mind again I should cut a ridiculous figure. Tell him, however, in my name, that I consider his second letter as not having been received, and that I hold by his letter of Aug. 2, to which I replied on Sept. 1. Is that right? If he likes he can write to me about the matter, omitting from consideration the second letter.

It is now a week or so since I sent Perrin the changes of the Third Act, which consist simply in taking out entirely the two pieces after the Rataplan, adding for the elucidation of the plot eight verses of recitative to the Fourth Act.

You say there is no time to lose. I agree. But what is there for me to do? Is the translation made? Are you leaving the *dénouement* as it stands?

You are extraordinarily sensitive. My letter was *raide*! Impossible! I thought I had never been so polite. Could a man of understanding like you interpret things so badly? But you are joking! Could you pretend not to understand my friendliness?

Goodbye for the present. Write to me soon. Goodbye, goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 20.

Busseto,
Sept. 20, 1865.

Dear Léon,

I see in the *France Musicale* that Bagier wants to give *Boccanegra* in November! Who could have told them that? He must be mad! Who is going to sing it at that time? Some chorus-singer?

I wrote the other day and am writing again to-day to M. Perrin that the changes made do not please me any too well. Who is going to perform *La Forza*? Let me know M. Perrin's ideas on this matter.

How are the Parisian theatres doing? How many hundred thousand francs is M. Bagier going to lose this year? That poor Théâtre des Italiens! Is it really impossible to find an able man who would bring it back to the front rank and gain a few hundred thousand francs instead of losing them?

Your affectionate,

G. VERDI.

No. 21.

St. Agata, Busseto,

May 6, 1866.

Dear Léon,

I am expecting from one minute to the next to hear the guns, and here I am so near to the Army camps that it wouldn't surprise me to see a cannon-ball arrive in my room one fine morning. War is inevitable. Matters have come to such a point that even if all the world did not want it we should still want it. There is no holding back the masses—that is not even in the King's power; and that which will be will be, but war there must be. The Congress is a *plaisanterie*. It ought to have been called before Austria threatened. Now it is no longer a matter for diplomacy.*

When the war breaks out I shall have to leave these parts, as they are too much exposed, but I haven't the heart to leave Italy. Where shall I go? What shall I do? Who knows?

It is a pity, because for the last fortnight the opera was getting on so well. I have finished the Third Act and begun the Fourth. When this is done I consider the opera finished, because the Fifth Act will be written and should be written in a moment. I know that this *moment* does not occur every day, but in a *week* or a *fortnight* it ought to.

Have you read in Ricordi's paper Filippi's article on *Raoul Ordinaire's* pamphlet? He considers it a pseudonym and looks on you as the author. It is not a pleasant insinuation. I think you would do well to reply, but it is *Raoul Ordinaire* himself who ought to reply in the strongest terms. Notice the leanings of this Filippi. He admits criticisms of Rossini, but won't have anything bad said of Meyerbeer.

Goodbye, goodbye.

Write to me.

G. VERDI.

* Short sentence illegible.

No. 22.

Busseto,

June 18, 1866.

Dear Léon,

I am sending you the letter for Roger. Tell Peragallo to keep by him my money in a form which I can use at Paris. Here ready cash has practically disappeared, and I shall be bringing with me to Paris banknotes that for the moment won't be worth anything.

You do not understand my last letter* or else you played the deaf man. You have told M. Perrin that on account of the war that is about to break out here I shall arrive at Paris sooner. On the contrary, I wrote to you that precisely because we shall have war *I was most grieved to leave Italy*. I told you this and I repeat it. Further, I ask you to go to M. Perrin and say to him that I ask him as a favour to allow me to stay in Italy beyond the time agreed on. Besides, if I came to Paris now I think I should not finish the opera. Above all things, you know I cannot work at Paris. If I had written during the time I stayed there the opera would have been finished by this time. But I work very little there. First my bad throat and now is the war! In short, this opera is in the midst of fire and flame, and between so many excitements either it will turn out better than the others or it will be a dreadful thing. So I say it again—and I beg you to plead my cause—ask M. Perrin to give me a little time and to allow me to finish thinking out the opera here. I shall perhaps be able, and I hope, to finish the Fourth Act by the end of the month. There is not much to be thought out for the Fifth. It is no fault of mine that I could not work at Paris, and that afterwards I was unwell, and that now there is the war agitating me tremendously. I ask your assistance and beg you to be an eloquent pleader. To-morrow or later I will reply to M. Perrin's letter.

Meanwhile, please tell M. Du Locle that I have written him two letters, one a week ago, the second yesterday. I see he has not had them. Tell him I addressed them to M. Camille Du Locle, à l'Opéra, Paris. Have a search made at the General Post Office for them, because I must have an answer to yesterday's letter about some changes of the libretto. Write to me soon about everything.

Goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 23.

Genoa,

July 6, 1866.

Dear Léon,

I came here yesterday, and directly I arrived I read in the papers something that causes me the deepest grief—Austria cedes Venice to the Emperor of the French! Is it possible? What will the Emperor do with it? Will he keep it? Or will he give it to us? But we cannot accept it, and I hope we shall refuse it. You owe us nothing and we want nothing. You who are so susceptible in matters of

* See the letter of May 6.

honour will understand and respect this feeling in others. No, the Emperor cannot and must not accept Venice by any means or on any account. Why not? Perhaps by reason of the events of the 24th? But when all is said, they dishonour no one. The stroke did not succeed, it is true, but you must admit it is a difficult matter to make an exposed attack on an enemy sheltered by formidable positions. At any rate, they all showed their courage, and if we had many killed, the Austrians had as many and perhaps more. And although it is said the day was lost, I should like to know what the Austrians have gained. — And Paris illuminated!!! No, no; peace is not yet made and cannot be made in that way. There are still men and soldiers, and perhaps even now while I write a fierce battle may be in progress, and I wish and desire for our troops just that spirit and that bravery they showed on the 24th.

I ought to be writing to you of other matters, but my head is too full, and besides in hours so difficult and anxious for us I should be ashamed to be absorbed in music.

Let M. Perrin know that I am not writing and that I cannot write, and that I cannot compose a single note. I am in a very bad way.

Goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 24.

Genoa,

July 14, 1866.

Dear Léon,

A week has now passed since the fateful note of the *Moniteur* and the feeling of anger is now quieter, but reason, more inexorable than before, shows us clearly your position as a terrible one both internally and externally. Meanwhile, it is clear to us that France and the Great Powers do not want Austria destroyed. Now if France makes peace, we cannot make war alone; if Prussia rejects peace what will France do? Will she join with Austria? You will say "It is impossible." But I would add that the *force of events* may draw you into doing things to-morrow that to-day appear impossible! This is what is being said and thought here, and you must agree that this reasoning is quite logical. For us, I say again, the position is of the gloomiest, and nothing but a victory of Cialdini's can save us; but even this will become impossible if the Austrians go on doing what they did at Rovigo, beating a retreat after blowing up the forts and burning and sacking the town. *Burning and sacking!* That is the civilising mission of this nation that is to be upheld at any price!

You see the picture is not a pretty one, and the future looks very dark. In this state of affairs, how do you expect me to have any inclination to come to Paris?† There is only one thing to be done—cancel the contract with the Opéra. Ask this of M. Perrin, and if he grants it I shall consider it as a favour and be most grateful.

Answer by return of post so that I can make my arrangements.

Goodbye, goodbye.

Your affectionate,

G. VERDI.

* The Battle of Custozza, June 24.

† The transcript of the letter is here very faulty, but this seems to be the general sense.

No. 25.

Piacenza,

March 24, 1866.

Dear Léon,

Here I am at Piacenza, and in a few hours I shall be at home. Our voyage from Nice to Genoa was excellent, notwithstanding a very rough sea. We stayed nearly three days at Genoa to drink in a little sunshine. This pure air and the mild climate restore the blood and expand the lungs. Once back at home, if only I can shake off this wretched throat trouble, I hope to finish the opera soon.

I need not tell you how grateful Peppina and I are for your charming company as far as Genoa. I don't doubt that you had an excellent return journey. Let me have news of yourself. Kind regards to all.

Goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 26.

Busseto,

April 28, 1866.

Dear Léon,

I have received your last, which enclosed M. Perrin's. Let it be so then; it is all right, and we won't speak of it again. I am working diligently as far as my throat trouble lets me. To think that for four months, though sometimes better, sometimes worse, it has never left me! The last two days it has been rather bad and I am unable to work. Two days lost! The attractions of the country, of horses, of Gisella, etc., do not distract me at all. Not once, no, not a single time have I driven out since I came back here. The horses stand idle, and Gisella, who is just being broken in and is getting so gentle and so beautiful, I hardly ever see. I stroll about the garden, *et voilà tout!* Notwithstanding that, *Don Carlos* does not progress as quickly as I could wish. I can, however, yet finish in time, but good health is a necessity.

Goodbye, goodbye.

G. VERDI.

No. 27.

Piacenza,

March 24, 1867.*

Dear Léon,

For the past week I have been going to and fro by train between Genoa and St. Agata, and that is partly why I did not write before, and also that I knew Peppina sent you a letter directly we returned to Italy. I am going back to St. Agata again to-day, and shall remain there until I have finished arranging my plants and put my garden in order. Peppina is meanwhile at Genoa in the midst of upholsterers, carpenters and builders, etc., etc., and so one can never get any peace.

Yet this seems truly a paradise after having had to do with the Opéra for eight months. I know nothing more of *Don Carlos*!* I have not

* *Don Carlos* was produced at the Opéra on March 11, 1867.

read any newspapers except yours, *L'Entr'acte* and the *Revue Musicale*. Let me know if the Press is generally favourable or hostile, and don't be afraid of hurting my feelings. I have read a letter in the *Perseveranza* of Milan. Poor Filippi! He does his utmost to speak well of it, but cannot. The words of the article are words of praise, but at bottom he thinks it is very bad. But don't let us talk any more of newspapers and of the Opéra and the great Louis XIV. Theatre. Poor *Don Carlos*! Vigorous with many elements of success! But they have done all they can to spoil it! In about two months' time you will be in Italy! You promised, and must not fail. We must spend some happy days together and forget all that happened at Paris, except your friendliness and your courage, and, above all, the most kind attentions you showed me during my long stay there. Yes, my dear Léon, I shall never forget them: I thank you for them and shall ever thank you.

Goodbye, goodbye.

Your affectionate,

G. VERDI.

No. 28.

Genoa,

April 1, 1867.

My Dear Léon,

We really are a lot of lunatics! I ask you was it necessary to travel up and down the railway in order to relieve one's mind after eight months at the Opéra! In short, one never comes to the end, and one would never find a minute to write operas again if it were not for rehearsals!

I have read in Ricordi's *Gasetta* the account of what the chief French papers say of *Don Carlos*. In short, I am an almost perfect Wagnerian. But if the critics had only paid a little more attention they would have seen that there are the same aims in the Trio in *Ernani*, in the sleepwalking scene in *Macbeth* and in other pieces. But the question is not whether *Don Carlos* belongs to a system, but whether the music is good or bad. That question is clear and simple and, above all, the right one to ask.

Goodbye, my dear Léon.

G. VERDI.

No. 30.

Genoa,

June 11, 1867.

Dear Léon,

So the London production is a success? If it is, what will they say at the Opéra, seeing that at London a work is staged in 40 days while they take four months!! However, you are not telling me anything new when you say that Costa is a great conductor and that the brass is better than Saxe's. Any instruments are better than Saxe's! Nor am I surprised at the *encore* of some numbers. That may appear strange at Paris, but I can imagine the effect the Trio is capable of producing when sung by three performers who have the *rhythm*. But rhythm is a dead letter for the performers at the Opéra. Two things will always be wanting at the Opéra—*rhythm* and *enthusiasm*. They do many things well, but they will never exhibit the fire that transports

and carries one away, or at any rate not until they teach singing better at the Conservatoire and find a conductor like Costa or Mariani. But it is also a little the fault of you French putting stumbling blocks in the way of your artistes with your *bon goût, comme il faut*, &c. Leave the arts in complete liberty and tolerate defects in matters of inspiration. If you terrify the man of genius with your wretched measured criticism, he will never let himself go, and you will rob him of his naturalness and enthusiasm. But if you are content as things are, and if the Opéra likes losing several hundred thousand francs and eight or ten months' time in producing an opera, then go on doing it—I don't mind.

Your affectionate,
G. VERDI.

No. 31.

Genoa,

Oct. 30, 1867.

Dear Léon,

What the devil I wrote to you I don't know, but without intending it I must have written stupidly to have vexed you so much. I have never spoken nor intended to speak of duties and obligations, nor is there any need to. If I said you are fond of fishing, of hunting and the country, I am not doing you any wrong, because I love the country myself beyond all words. As to my friends, I don't know what to say. If they became distant with you directly I arrived in Paris it means that my presence chilled the blood in their veins. But let us have done with these trifles and let us talk about *Don Carlos*, which seems to have had the greatest success at Bologna. Everyone says the performance is wonderful and that it contains most powerful effects. I cannot help making a few reflections. Here, after rehearsals of less than a month, the greatest effects are obtained. At the Opéra at the end of eight months' rehearsals you get a cold, lifeless performance. You see whether I am not right in saying that a single hand, powerful and sure, can work miracles. You have seen it with Costa in London, you will see it still more with Mariani at Bologna. Will the Opéra never be persuaded that on the musical side their performances are less than mediocre? And will they never believe that there is need of a reform and of a musical direction which shall be strong, powerful, and *one* alone?

Goodbye, goodbye,
Your affectionate, G. VERDI.

No. 32.

Genoa,

Feb. 19, 1868.

Dear Léon,

My friend Frascini will bring you this letter and will give you news of me, and will tell you whether I am better off here than in the midst of tribulation at the Opéra. Poor Thomas, has it quite finished him there yet? But it is true that he, being a Frenchman, will inspire that love and esteem which I have never been able to win from the Beethovens of the "big shop." What is Mazzoleni doing? Is he studying *Don Carlos* or have they put him to sleep?

Perhaps that would be the best plan, and I shouldn't waste tears over it. My last word about the Opéra is to ask you to send me as soon as you can the libretto of *Hamlet*, and give me news of its success soon after the first night.

Now let us talk about pictures. You will find enclosed a photograph I bought at Paris on my return from Russia. It is taken from an engraving of a Madonna of Rafael's. The original exists here at Genoa in the house of an old aristocratic family. As the picture has never been out of the house of its possessors, they would like to know if there is at Paris another Madonna of Rafael's, or a copy, which must be a very fine one, as the engraving is so good. In short, ask either M. de Villars or Barroilhet,* as they will know if it exists and where it is, and if the Paris one is another original or a copy, and how and by whom the engraving was made. In fact, the whole story. Let me have the photograph back soon.

And now goodbye. If you want to see the sun and sit in 60 degs. Fahr., come to Genoa.

G. VERDI.

No. 33.

Genoa,
March 12, 1868.

Dear Léon,

Thank you for your news. I have read the libretto of *Hamlet*. It couldn't possibly be worse. Poor Shakespeare! How badly they have treated him! There is only the scene between Hamlet and the Queen that is well done and is dramatic and suitable for music. But the rest! . . . Mum!

I will not say anything of *Mefistofele*: you already know of its success and of the scandalous scenes on the third night.

Du Locle tells me that at the Opéra they are thinking about Mazzoleni and *Don Carlos*. Plainly and honestly, what do you think of Mazzoleni? What do the people at the Opéra, Gevaert and Vauthrot, say of him? If Mazzoleni [sings], would there not be some way of putting warmth into the orchestra and persuading Sasse that her part is better than she thinks? Do you know that Stolz is singing the first part, and that not only at Bologna but even at Parma (where the orchestra is very weak) effects were produced unknown at Paris, and that Stolz was *prima donna*?

You will see that it will be the same at Milan. Here, too, the opera will be produced within about a month. There will be very large choruses and a powerful orchestra, and if Mariani were there success would be assured. For all that, *la grande boutique* will keep on the same routine to the end of time, enervating and enfeebling everything that lives and moves. Up till now spectacular effects and somersaults; from now on metaphysics, later perhaps astronomy—anything and everything except music; at least the music that is inspired by the heart.

Goodbye, goodbye.

Your affectionate,

G. VERDI.

* This was Paul Barroilhet, the well-known baritone, born at Bayonne in 1805, and engaged at the Opéra from 1839 to 1847. He was a great lover of painting and sold on several occasions collections of modern pictures.

No. 34.

St. Agata, Busseto,

May 8, 1868.

Dear Léon,

I really have cause to be annoyed. You have not even written to me about the bad performance of *Don Carlos* at Bordeaux, Brussels and Darmstadt! Poor *Don Carlos*. We don't do things quite so bad in Italy. When they are done with enthusiasm one gets vigorous and spirited performances such as you gentlemen of the Opéra never even dream of.

I have read your article, which is really excellent, only you put it a little too strongly. Let things run their own course. Truth will out.

That French composers are the only men of genius—it may be so. That French singers are the best in the world—granted; all the same they must learn how to use their voices. But that they perform music well at the Opéra—ha, ha, ha, ha!

I say nothing of Mazzoleni. It is a phenomenon that often recurs at the Opéra. He must have been spoilt by overtraining. Oh, *la grande boutique!*

I rejoice to hear you are in good health again. Write to me soon and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

G. VERDI.

No. 35.

St. Agata, Busseto,

July 9, 1868.

Dear Léon,

I was thinking you had completely forgotten me, when yesterday I received your book "*Mes Souvenirs*." I am keeping it to read with the greatest pleasure, and I know it will be very good and amusing. Thank you very much for it.

Last week I was at Milan. I had not been there for twenty years and I found it completely changed. The new "*Galleria*" is really very fine—it is artistic and imposing. We still have among us the feeling for grandeur united to beauty. I went to see our great poet* there: he is a great Italian too, and a saint! There is a simplicity about our great men that is not to be found in those of other countries.

Yours,

G. VERDI.

* Manzoni.

(To be concluded.)

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

TUDOR MUSIC

Contrapuntal Technique in the 16th Century. By R. O. Morris.
Oxford University Press.

Tudor Church Music. Vol. II. Byrd. Quarto Edition. and
Tudor Church Music (30 selections). Octavo Edition. Published for
the Carnegie U.K. Trust by the Oxford University Press.

Byrd: Masses for 3, 4 and 5 Voices. Stainer & Bell.

The study of enthusiasm is a very proper one for an historian, why things are popular, and why interest in them flags, dies and then revives; is it some great secular process (such as the equinoctials of Queubus) or is it blind chance? Whatever it may be, this review is concerned with two enthusiasms, the first, the creative enthusiasm of the Elizabethan musicians, and the second, the appreciative enthusiasm of this present age for the music of that age. I rather stress the point of this "present" age for reasons which will become apparent later on. The subjects with which this review is concerned are the music itself and a technical study of that music. Mr. Morris's book on "Contrapuntal Technique in the 16th Century" is a key to the understanding of Elizabethan music. It is technical, being written for men with a definite and precise technical vocabulary. It draws no popular analogies between music and other arts, but expresses itself with the utmost lucidity either in musical terms or in words of which the meaning and connotations are clear and precise. That is a good deal more than one can say of most æsthetic or technical criticism of the arts. Art critics can hardly resist chattering about a painter's "orchestration of the shadows" or the "subtle counterpoint of his texture." Mr. Morris is more happily equipped than they in that he knows exactly what he is talking about.

I am undertaking to review this music and this book from the point of view of a performer solely (I do not blush to add that, in technical knowledge of counterpoint, I cannot tell a hawk from a handsaw without several good looks at it), for it is only by singing Elizabethan and other polyphonic music that I have any acquaintance with it.

One of the differences that first makes itself clear between English sacred and secular music of the 16th century and, let us say, Palestrina or Orlando di Lasso, is that English music is guided very much more by the subtle rhythms and speech accents of the words: it is as if Italian was meant to be sung and English was meant to be spoken. The exact speech stress is more often a clue to the solution of a rhythmic problem in English music than in Italian. Compare Byrd, "Though Amaryllis dance in green," with Luca Marenzio, "Scaldava il sol" or a Gastoldi madrigal.



When both nations are setting words in Latin—the Mass or a motet
—they draw closer together,



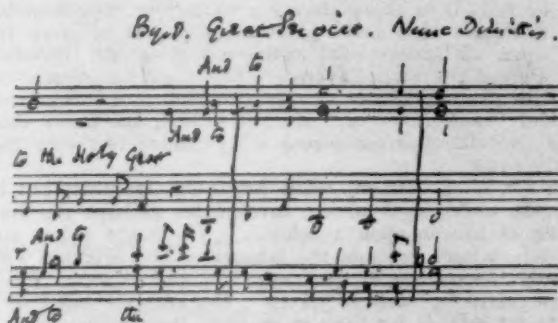
but still, to my mind, the Englishman here shows a fuller sense of the variety of rhythms which will run in harness together.

Let us imagine that we lived, and were of mature years, in 1588, that we had written madrigals to English words and enjoyed the triumphant sense of having got the exact reproduction of the spoken accent. We were at that moment or thereabouts (for in these matters of dates I cannot be put on my oath) constrained to stop writing Church music in Latin and write it in English instead; we should also find that the new English translation was absolutely meant to sing and walked straight in to all kinds of nice rhythms. Should we not quite naturally write something like this for the words, "The sea is His, and He made it"?



It seems so inevitable that if I were asked for the grounds of my belief that God made the sea I should say "Byrd says so."

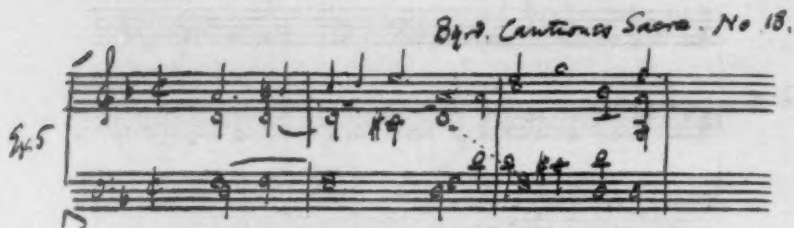
If you had been setting "*Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto*" for many years and you were suddenly faced with "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost" in its place, you would examine carefully the rhythmic possibilities of the latter. You would also have in your mind that your congregation had for years listened, with the respect born of ignorance, to the sonorous Latin of the Roman ritual, which no one expected them to understand: while now here was a service in their mother tongue of which they could not plead ignorance, but they could and did say that they were better pleased and more spiritually exalted by something they could not be supposed to understand. Hence doubtless the exalted place given to music in our Church service, it helps you not to understand the words (e.g., "Or ever your pots be made hot," "Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee," and many such examples). It would obviously have been amusing to play with the triple rhythm of "To the Holy Ghost" in this way, giving to the bass triple rhythm in crotchets, while the alto has it in quavers, and the tenor cuts it shorter still.



All these things you will find out by singing them, and if you want to see them in their proper perspective as factors in the technique of composition read Mr. Morris and you shall know. This book should be the starting point for a student who wishes to know what are the traditions of his national music.

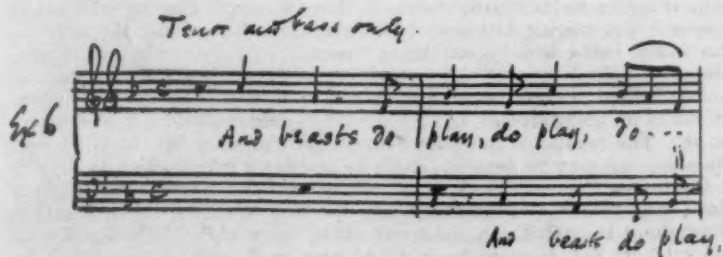
Now, in a very brief space of time all this music was born, waxed lusty and died. It was buried so securely that few men knew its sepulchre. It walked once or twice before Mr. Samuel Pepys, who bade it return to its charnel house in these words, "Singing with many voices is not singing but a sort of instrumental musique, the sense of the words being lost by not being heard . . . whereas singing properly, I think, should be but with one or two voices and the counterpoint" (Sept. 15, 1667). It then bided its time till the learned authors of works on counterpoint and musical antiquarians held a post-mortem on it. The results of this post-mortem are shown in Mr. Morris's first chapter, and may be seen at length in Horsley's introduction to Byrd's "Cantiones Sacre," Book I., published by the Musical Antiquarian Society in 1842. The introduction is too long to quote, but it breathes throughout the spirit of a righteous editor thoroughly disillusioned with his subject; yet, because he is a just man and one that fears God, he

sets down Byrd's music as he found it, even up to the point of including this passage:—

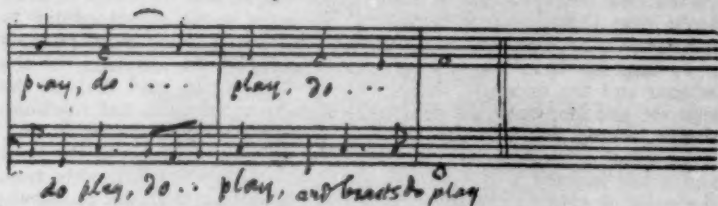


It is true he calls it in the preface "a monstrous combination," but he leaves it alone. How much more securely will he await the last judgment upon all editors (and reviewers) than Mr. Novello, who published Purcell's evening hymn, "The night is come," written originally with a two-part finale for soprano and bass, with a note to state that Playford "unfortunately" did not publish the finale complete, so he (Mr. Novello) has completed it by adding two very dull and foolish inner parts.

The late Sir W. S. Gilbert, when Archibald Grosvenor put himself up for a raffle under legal advice, invoked for perhaps the first time the blessing of heaven upon a solicitor. We might follow suit and commend for suitable rewards the labours of Dr. Edmund Fellowes, who is really the pioneer in this revival of enthusiasm. We cannot particularise stars in such a galaxy. He and his band of fellow workers are remarkable for their knowledge, their judgment and their amazing industry. But there is one quality that makes them more amazing still. Most professional botanists refuse to be worried by flowers and plants until they have been properly dried and have become "specimens." Zoologists have a weakness for stuffed animals and bottled curiosities, and all prisoners and captives. These editors still regard this music as growing flowers or as animals enjoying their pleasure in the sun. They have, it is true, confined them within bars, but such reasonable bars that we can see the animals, and they in their turn can get out and frisk in the sun as they do here—



Byrd: *This sweet and merry month*



I make no apology for quoting so largely from Byrd. We celebrate his tercentenary this year along with those of Weelkes and Rossiter, and the quatercentenary of Ashton. But Byrd is the Father of the Chapel, he was revered in his own day and he shall not be named in our time without honour. And I think I may finally quote from a law by which Dr. Fellowes and myself were once bound at school—*Tabula legum paedagogicarum apud Win. Coll.*—a law which shall bind all singers of Elizabethan music in future: *Sociati omnes incedunto* ("Let no one go out without his Fellowes").

STUART WILSON.

Musical Competition Festivals. Ernest Fowles. (Kegan Paul.)

It will always be a matter of conjecture how far the pioneers of a new movement have been its real originators. In the exact sciences, maybe, discovery can make some new start, but in the process of social or æsthetic evolution it is hard to say whether the supposed initiator of a great idea has been the actual cause of the movement which followed it, or has merely stepped on to the moving staircase a few years ahead of his time. By all the laws of the game it was the late Miss Mary Wakefield who—probably quite unconsciously—started the renaissance of British music, and we should ever remember it to her. It was from the little Westmorland competition which she inaugurated in Kendal some thirty-odd years ago that the great festival movement has grown, with its Federation of some two hundred festivals from all over the British Isles and the Dominions and its hundreds of thousands of competitors, bidding fair to restore us to the place of pre-eminence which we held in the days of the Elizabethans. It was, no doubt, our turn, and there were many signs that we were ready for it. During the last fifty years our composers have been emerging from the shell one after another. But composers are like the buzzards and crested grebes, birds rare enough either to be given sanctuary by the ornithophil (if there be such a word) or shot at sight by the Cockney sportsman; it is not until its singers and players and dancers fill its fallows as thick as the green plover that a nation can call itself musical. In other words, no country can call its music its own until that music is the possession of its amateurs. This is what the Competition Festival movement is doing for us at a breathless pace.

It is evident from Mr. Fowles's book that he recognises this truth. He has the wisdom to see that he, like all the rest of us, professional

or not, is being swept along by it and he tells us what, in his opinion, are the vital points to bear in mind in handling it, and there can be little doubt that they are mostly right. He gives much sound advice to competitors, adjudicators and organisers in turn, but his main purpose is to impress upon us that our aim should be the inspiring of the listener and the amateur, and above all of the child, and that all the animate and inanimate paraphernalia of judges and rules and marking-sheets should be but policemen to shepherd them to that end. His evident love of children is one of the happiest features of the book and would in itself entitle it to our respect. It is written frankly from the point of view of the solo-competition in general and the pianoforte in particular, and hardly touches on the great choral music which is, and should be, the main feature of every festival in town or country, but the valuable criticisms and suggestions which he makes are almost as applicable to one as to the other. He wisely does not attempt to enumerate in detail the qualities—admirable and unobtainable—which the ideal adjudicator should possess—the power to separate the sheep from the goats at lightning speed and to make his decisions audible and articulate on the platform, with all the other gifts of tact and humour and sense of touch—but he has made it quite clear that it is the judge's duty to encourage rather than to blame, and everyone will agree with him. His analysis, too, of the comparative advantages of the examination and the festival competition, and the effect of each upon the immortal soul of music, is most interesting and encouraging, coming from such an authority on the former as himself. On one point we are inclined to differ from him. Selection committees should not be immune from public criticism. If they choose bad music for competition they should be told so publicly, gently if you will. If it be done privately, as he suggests, many of the competitors may never know that the music is bad, for want of being told, and may set their standard of taste by the very music they should never have been asked to perform.

The book does not attempt to cover all the ground and does not pretend to do so, but its point of view is eminently sound and it is, above all, human and kindly in spirit, so much so that if ever in the watches of the night we return in dreams to the days of our youth to play competitor and pianoforte we hope we shall see its author in the judge's chair.

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